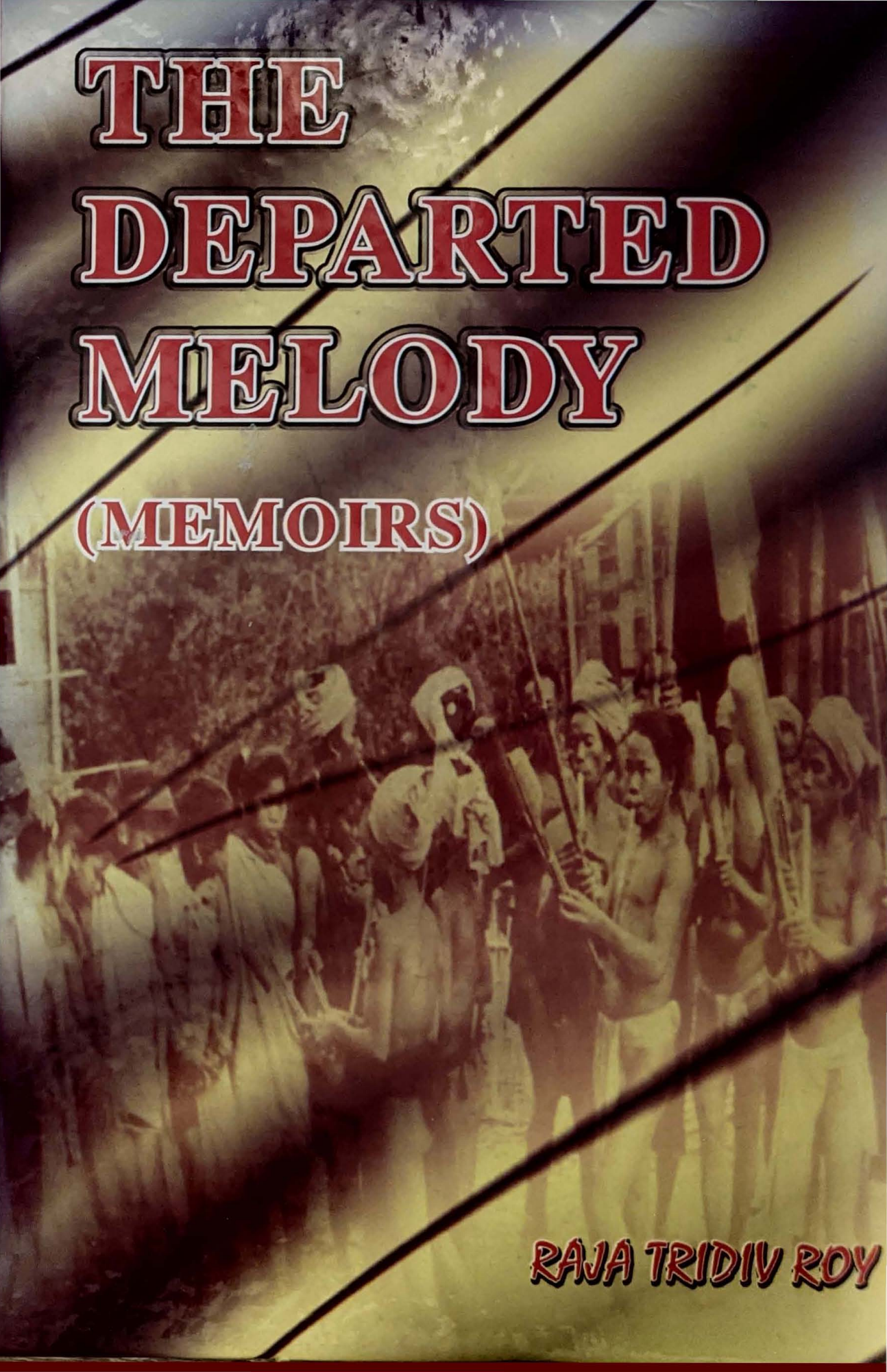
THE DEPARTED MELODY

(MEMOIRS)



RAJA TRIDIV ROY

THE DEPARTED MELODY

(MEMOIRS)

Raja Tridiv Roy

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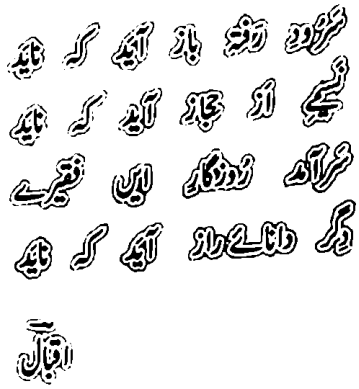
Dedication

To the indigenous peoples throughout the world and particularly to the Jummas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. From the latter part of the 20th Century, in the West, there has been an increasing awareness and consequent action in providing a measure of justice and autonomy to their First Peoples. My hope and my prayer is that in the 21st Century this nascent impulse will gather strength and permeate the third world in providing justice, understanding and respect to their deprived indigenous peoples.

RAJA TRIDIV ROY


سرود رفتہ باز آید کہ ناید
نسیم از حجاز آید کہ ناید
سر آمد روزگار ایں فقیرے
دگر دانائے راز آید کہ ناید

اقبال

"The Departed melody may return or not!
The Zephyr may blow again from the Hejaz or not!
The days of this Faqir have come to an end,
Another Seer may come or not!"

(Translation of Persian "Ruba'i",
recited by Iqbal himself, at Cambridge)

****

The departed melody for me is a spiral of jasmines, gardenias and tuberoses.
Its fragrance dances in the gentle breeze carrying its cargo of memories of loved ones and joyous moments. Yet as it vanishes its presence lingers on like a vivid dream on awaking.

Raja Tridiv Roy

WHAT I HAVE LIVED FOR

Bertrand Russell

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy – ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness – that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it, finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I sought, and thought it might seem too good for human life, this is what – at last – I have found.

With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart. Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a hated burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

****

Philosopher, mathematician, writer, political activist, Bertrand Russell lived a profound and full life. This passage is the famous prologue to his Autobiography. I had the privilege of meeting him when he visited Rangamati in 1952. The three driving forces that impelled him and motivated him are on a different level from the ancient philosopher's eros, libidos, and thanatos; or at least modifies them. Russell's is one of the greatest minds that have shared their thoughts with mankind. We could do well in taking him as a guide.

Raja Tridiv Roy

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And last but not least I am grateful to the memory of my father who encouraged me to maintain a diary from an early age.

Raja Tridiv Roy

Foreword

It gives me immense pleasure to write a few words on the Memoirs of Raja Tridiv Roy. Raja Sahib needs no introduction in Pakistan, where he is held in great respect and affection. He is the Raja of Chakma, the predominant people of the Hill Tracts with ancient historical and cultural traditions that remained as an Excluded Area or Tribal Area from the time the British entered the Area in 1860. A pen picture of the piquant and picturesque life in the Hill Tracts is endearing; and their problems and sorrows quite saddening. After the dismemberment of Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh, it holds an even more compelling geo political interest to many, though not many Pakistanis are conversant with its history or culture.

With this book Raja Sahib has revived our nostalgia for our lost past and rekindled our affection for our brothers and sisters in Bangladesh, including the indigenous peoples there. The author has also touched on certain historical and political dimensions and described from his experience some of the grim moments, finally leading to the Dhaka debacle.

As federal minister in the first ever elected government of Pakistan in 1971 and Adviser until he left as Ambassador to Argentina in 1981, he was responsible for many measures for the welfare of the minorities in Pakistan. His contributions to Tourism also are unrivalled, especially in opening up the Northern Areas. In the field of diplomacy, his contributions as Special Envoy on numerous occasions have been noteworthy. His most memorable service to Pakistan was as the leader of the Pakistan delegation to the United Nations in 1972. After return from New York he was unprecedentedly received at the airport by President Bhutto and his entire cabinet, and he accompanied Raja Sahib in a large procession to the latter's residence.

Raja Tridiv Roy spent many years as Pakistan's Ambassador in Buenos Aires, and affords us a glance at the rich culture and heritage of Argentina and some other parts of South America. He gives us an occasional glimpse of his strength of character and a hint of his colourful and many faceted personality, his essential love for humanity, and his sense of humour. These memoirs of a remarkably talented, witty and humane man of vast and varied experience as hereditary Chief, well travelled politician and diplomat, are extremely interesting, informative and instructive. I can recommend "The Departed Melody" as a 'must read' for its evocations on history and contemporary politics, of life's triumphs and tribulations and for the profundities on a wide canvas, even when touched upon with a light brush.

Mohammedmian Soomro
Chairman, Senate of Pakistan.
July 12, 2003

PART I

The Jummas and their Culture

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Little is known to the outside world geographically, historically or culturally of a part of South and Southeast Asia, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, that since December 1971 has become politically a part of Bangladesh. The Hill Tracts is of strategic importance in a geopolitical sense because it borders Tripura and Mizoram, two states in India, and Rakhaing or Arakan in Burma. There are only two ethnic entities with a homogeneous compactness of geography and culture in Bangladesh. One is the Bengali, a people that traditionally live in the deltaic plains, the other the hillmen "Pahari" or hillpeople of the Hill Tracts, of a separate ethnic and cultural group collectively called Jumma. I am not after reciting the dichotomy that is apparent, nor merely at championing a new nationalities case, but am seeking a happy resolution to an unhappy situation that has been brought about by the unholy machinations of power hungry unscrupulous elements.

These elements brought about suffering and unspeakable tragedies and succeeded in forging a warped and inequitable power equation in the subcontinent in 1947. In the process of regaining independence in the subcontinent the powers that be and the power hungry politicians, both sometimes callously ignored the rights of small nationalities and peoples. One such case is that of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. And the injustice was perpetrated again in December 1971 when Bangladesh emerged from the ashes of East Pakistan. In 1972 Mizoram (20,000 sq km) with less population than the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Tripura with a smaller territory (10,000 sq km) than the Hill Tracts with (14,200 sq km) were both elevated to the full status of statehood in India. They have their own elected legislatures and Governors and Chief Ministers.

The Chakma calls himself, and is known amongst his own people, as Sangma. This sumame is also found amongst Garos who inhabit Assam and the border areas of Sylhet and Mymensingh districts of Bangladesh. They mainly inhabit the Garo Hills District that comprises 3119 sq miles with headquarters at Tura. In 1971 their population was 398,524. In 1972 the Districts of Khasi and Jayantia Hills and Garo Hills were constituted as a full-fledged state in India, with its capital at Shillong. The Khasis, like the Garos, have a matrilineal social system and are the only Mon-Khmer Group in the subcontinent. The Chakmas, some say, could also be Mon-Khmer in origin due to the similarity of script. The Tangchangya, the Chak and the Doinak appear to be the same people that formed distinct groups and got cut off from each other. Gradually, cultural variations crept in amongst them and the Chak of

the south today and the Chakma of the centre and north have very few affinities. The Tangchangya is considered to be Tangchakma or hill Chakma whereas the Tangchangya considers the Chakma "Anokya" Chakma, meaning Chakma from the west.

Regrettably the Hill Tracts has not received any constitutional recognition nor any meaningful autonomy in Bangladesh. A guerrilla war followed from the early 1970s and lasted until the signing of the Peace Accord with the Bangladesh Government in December 1997. Amongst other terms and conditions a Regional Council was to have been set up. It exists in name but has not been allowed to function as yet by the successive Bangladesh Governments. Let us hope that wisdom will prevail and the Bangladesh Government will permit not only the functioning of an effective Regional Council but will grant the same amount of autonomy as has been allowed to the Nagas, and the Mizos across the border.

What constitutes a country, what a people? When do a people become a nation? When and where do the much flaunted, dignity and justice endowed slogan "the right to self-determination of peoples" start and when and where does it end? Experts have been splitting hairs over the definition of a people and a nation. The Chakmas have the criteria that go to make up the term "nation," but have been deprived of the recognition of their political dignity. The region that is theirs has been treated like an appendage and saddled with a gross misnomer: the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Anyone who has been to the Tracts knows that Chittagong and the Hill Tracts are as dissimilar as the people living in either.

This country of mine I call *Parvati.* I gave her this name when I broadcast over the Mitali programme of Radio Pakistan to my people on the thrice-blessed full moon day of May 1976. Some of the hillpeople would like to call the Hill Tracts "Jummaland," which is appropriate enough. Still others prefer "Chamatri" after the three most populous peoples: the Chakma, Marma and Tripura. The Bangladesh government might ask the Jummas to choose a suitable name and discard the name "Chittagong" Hill Tracts. The people might even choose "The Hill Tracts" or "The Eastern Hill Tracts" or "Eastern Chadigang" or simply name it after their old kingdom "Chadigang."

There are now 11 different peoples in the Tracts. The vast majority are Buddhists, and the rest Hindus, Christians or Animists. The most numerous, constituting about half the indigenous population of the Tracts, are the Chakmas, an ancient people claiming descent from the Shakyas, the race from which the Buddha came forth. Some of them live in adjoining Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Arunachal States in India, and in the Arakan province in Burma. Small numbers have migrated to the US, Canada, UK, France, Australia and elsewhere too.

Ethnically the Chakma people belong to the Tibeto Burman or Mon-Khmer group although there are some Indo-Aryan traces visible in them. They speak their own language, which is perhaps of Prakritic origin and has similarities with

Assamese and Bengali. The written language is probably an offshoot of the Khmer script, which it closely resembles even now. The Linguistic Journal of India, Volume V (page 321) says, "It (the Chakma character) is written in an alphabet which allowing for its curvasive form, is almost identical with the Khmer character, which was formerly in use in Cambodia, Laos, Annam, and at least, the southern part of Burma. The Khmer alphabet is in its turn, the same as that which was current in the south of India in the sixth and seventh centuries. The Burmese character is derived from it, but is much more corrupted than the Chakma." Through disuse, the script was fast becoming obsolete but the college students have revived it and the script is being used for writing poems and songs. No literature exists from ancient times save the 27 *Taras* collectively known as *Agartara*. They are religious literature and most contain Buddhist sutras originally written on palm leaves. In Mahayana cosmology *Tara* is the counterpart of Gautama Buddha and is the personification of wisdom.

It is interesting to note that certain clans or Gozas of the Chakmas are named after places where they were known to have resided for some time. Toinya Goza Chakmas used to inhabit the banks of the river Toin in the southern Tracts. The Dhamai Goza left their mark in modern day Chittagong where a well-known market place is known as Dhamairhat. Whatever be the variations in cultural practices between the various peoples of the Tracts, they form one ethnic group and have a deep and abiding sense of belonging to their homeland. Their ethos has grown from the soil on which they have lived for centuries and in their shared practice of slash and burn agriculture, *jum* (swidden), and while they co-exist peacefully with each other, even if they had been head-hunting among each other earlier, they all consider themselves as hillmen of the Hill Tracts, as distinct from the plainspeople, whom they view as aliens.

place & Indigeneity: sense of belongingness

Besides, there are also the physical features of the hillmen: comparatively light skinned, slightly Mongol in appearance, and sturdily built, as different from the darker skinned, and slighter in build, plainsmen. And while the hillmen collectively known as the jumma, speak their own languages, the plainsmen have their Bangla bhasha. It is a little saddening that these two ethnic groups, the plainspeople from the lowlands of Bengal and the hillpeople from the Hill Tracts, have not been able to live together in harmony whenever there was an absence of a political power to restrain them. The hillpeople want to live according to their own *weltanshauung* in the Hill Tracts and are not prepared to submit to the plainspeople or to their ethos and values. However, before the British period, when the plainspeople did not encroach on the hillpeople's territory and the relationship was one of trade – both communities existed in harmony. Once the people of the Tracts regain their lost dignity and heritage and become their own masters in their own land, undoubtedly they will be at peace with the people of the plains, who will then cease to be exploiters and become good friends.

It was to fight their cause that the jumma hillpeople had elected me to the National Assembly of Pakistan in the general elections on 7 December 1970. The horrendous civil war of 1971 and the split between East and West Pakistan leading to

the creation of Bangladesh have physically separated me from my people. Since then I have observed with admiration their valiant efforts to preserve their identity as hillmen and to prevent their being absorbed into the plainsmen's community by becoming pseudo Bengalis.

CHAPTER II

Recent and early history

According to the Times Atlas of the World 1997 figures, the area and population of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are: Pakistan area 310403 sq. miles (803940 sq. km.) and population 129,808,000, Bangladesh area 55598 sq. miles (143998 sq. km.), population 120,433,000, Nepal area 56827 sq. miles (147181 sq. km.), population 21,918,000. It is a little curious that the area of Bangladesh as given by various prestigious publications should vary so much. Encyclopedia Britannica William Benton Publisher 1943-1973: 55126 sq. miles, The Cambridge Encyclopedia, Editor, David Crystal First Published: 1990: 55583 sq. miles, Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition: 55598 sq. miles, and Collier's Encyclopedia: 54501 sq. miles.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts in the southeastern portion of the South Asian subcontinent occupies about 10% of Bangladesh, which is a little bit smaller than the Kingdom of Nepal. The indigenous population of the Hill Tracts formed 1.03% of the total population of the country according to the 1981 census. However, according to the 1991 census it had been reduced to 0.91% (1,205,987 to 10,631,5000). The population of the Chakmas is 258,628, Magh (Marma) 142,334 and Tripura 61,129. These cover the majority of the indigenous population of 501,144 (51.43) only. At the time, in 1991, the Bengali population in the Hill Tracts was 4,73,301 (48.57%).

After the annexation by the British in 1860, until the partition of India in 1947, the Chittagong Hill Tracts nominally belonged to Bengal for most of the time, and for some years formed a part of the Province of Bengal, the Eastern Bengal and Assam. Assam had become a separate province in 1874, before when it was a part of Bengal. In ethnicity, language, religion and culture, the Jumma hillpeople of the Hill Tracts belong to the Tibeto- Burman and Mon-Khmer groups and are an integral part of the Mongolian family. There is great affinity and kinship with the peoples of northeastern India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Burma and Thailand.

In August 1947, although 98% of the population was non-Muslim, Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Boundary Commission, inexplicably placed the Hill Tracts in Pakistan. In Sylhet district, which formed a part of the province of Assam, a referendum was held to ascertain the wishes of the people, as to whether they wanted to remain in Assam, which formed a part of India, or to join East Bengal, that is Pakistan. As the majority was Muslim it voted for inclusion in Pakistan. In British Balochistan which then like the Hill Tracts did not have voting rights for the legislature, the opinion of the chiefs was sought.

In the Hill Tracts no referendum was held. Nor was the opinion of the chiefs sought. It subsequently came to light that Radcliffe did this on the promptings of the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, as a counterpoise or sop to Pakistan, because the Muslim

majority area of Gurdaspur in the Punjab was awarded to India, thereby providing her with the only land link with the native State of Jammu and Kashmir, 78% of whose population was Muslim. The manifest reason proffered was the dependence of Chittagong port on the Hill Tracts, its immediate hinterland. The British authorities were so apprehensive of making the Hill Tracts Declaration public, because of possible political repercussions, that they suspended the announcement on the 13th August and only did so on the 18,th after all the independence day celebrations were over.

Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947 to its breakup in 1971 East Pakistan has always had a greater population than West Pakistan. However, compared with Pakistan, efforts at population control have been more successful in Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) and it is now less than Pakistan's. Also programmes for financial assistance to women, particularly in the rural areas through its Grameen Banks, have met with international acclaim. However, after 30 years of independence Bangladesh has now a per capita income of US$ 199/-. The UNDP human development indicators (HDI), which are calculated on the basis of infant mortality rates, literacy, health, education etc., placed Bangladesh as 143rd in 1997, 147th in 1998 and 150th in 1999, the lowest in South Asia. More than half of the population of Bangladesh lives on less than one dollar a day and along with Nepal and the Maldives is one of the poorest nations in the world. In contrast, the defence expenditure has steadily increased from 1% and now accounts for between 1.5 and 1.7% of GDP.

"The defence budget for 2000 was 7% higher than the previous year, and Taka 32 billion has been earmarked for defence as revenue expenditure and an additional Taka 720 million for other defence expenditures (CHT Commission 2000:20). In stark contrast, although Bangladesh has the highest infant mortality and the lowest life expectancy in the world, 2% is allocated for health and social welfare. To maintain the army in the CHT, it is estimated that the Government has to spend approximately US$ 125 million annually, with a daily expenditure amounting to Taka 1.5 crore, (CHT Commission 1994:2). With a Peace Accord in place in the CHT and peaceful relations with its neighbours, it is questionable whether this huge outlay on defence-related spending in a poverty striken country like Bangladesh can be justified. The presence of the military in the CHT only serves to perpetuate the isolation and marginalization of the indigenous people." (Indigenous Affairs, IWGIA, 2/01, pages 14-19).

The European Commission Country Strategy Paper Bangladesh 2002-2006, Page 12 says: "Bangladesh has ratified all the main international human rights treaties. In spite of this encouraging legal framework, the law and order situation in Bangladesh has deteriorated continually over the last two decades." Again it says on the same page: "Per capita income levels still remain distressingly low at around US$ 1 per day." On page 18 this is what it has to say: "VIII. Support to the Peace Process in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. To date no activities have been projected for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, since the donor community (including the EC) has so far

maintained always considered that the 1997 Peace Agreement should first be fully implemented. However, some donors (including the EC) are now considering to start conceptualizing and eventually to implement development activities in the CHT region, seeing therein, a positive impact on the peace process." Another minus point is that although a peace accord was signed with indigenous Jumma Guerrillas known as the Shanti Bahini on 2 December 1997 it has been inadequately implemented, and as reported by national and international media, violence against the indigenous people is again on the rise.

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Whitehead in his book *Thanglieana* says: "The East India Company had long cast a covetous eye across the Bay of Bengal and twice despatched ill-managed expeditions to establish a factory there, both of which ended in ignominious failure. Where force had failed diplomacy succeeded, and in 1710 the Nawab of Bengal, for services rendered, ceded to the Company along with other territories the district of Chittagong, whose administration was thereupon placed in the hands of one of its executives, called the chief, assisted by a council of advisers. With the establishment of British rule came a period of tranquillity and increasing prosperity, disturbed from time to time by raids by unknown tribes living in the eastern hills and the depredations of the polyglot inhabitants of the offshore island of Sandwip, which had become a cave of Adullam for outlaws of all races." However, it was not until 1765 that the East India Company obtained the *Diwani* (revenue rights) of Bengal from Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor of Delhi.

Whitehead continues: "In the early years Hindus from Tippera in the north and Buddhists from Arakan in the south, themselves of mixed Indo-Burmese origin, contended for its fertile lowlands. Chittagong grew up round a natural sea port which attracted trade from places as distant as Canton and Baghdad, and over its jetties came Muslim settlers who spread their faith among the earlier immigrants from western Bengal. In the 16th century Portuguese freebooters from Goa secured a foothold but, failing to found an empire, either entered the service of the rajahs of Arakan as mercenaries or turned pirates. The struggle for supremacy between Muslims and Buddhists came to a head in 1661 when the rajah of Arakan put to death the Mogul viceroy of Bengal who had sought refuge with him, leading to a punitive expedition, which resulted in the whole district becoming a province of the Mogul empire. Chittagong was for a time known as Islamabad. For a while the cauldron simmered, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Catholic living at uneasy peace with one another.

The conquest of Arakan by the Burmese in 1784 led to an incursion of refugees, among them many militants who began to use British territory as a base from which to launch counter-attacks against the Burmese occupying Arakan. The Burmese thus provoked sent a force into the district to exact punishment, which retired on receiving the assurance of the chief of Chittagong that the ringleaders, if apprehended, would be handed over. The job of settling the refugees, between thirty

and forty thousand in number, was given to Captain Cox who died within the year, bequeathing his name to the coastal town which has grown up on the site of his refugee camp."

Perhaps based on his experience of dealing with the criminal elements in his capacity of Superintendent of Police in Noakhali and Chittagong districts, Lewin developed a rather jaundiced view of Bengalis in general. Referring to Lewin, Whitehead observes: "The Bengalis he never managed to get on with, finding them (in his words) cringing, cowardly, lying and litigious ....."

"By the Treaty of Yandabo ratified in 1826 the Burmese have been forced to cede Arakan and the strip of Tenasserim coast as well as Assam and Manipur to the British, thus securing India's north-eastern frontier. The second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852 had resulted in the British annexing the province of Pegu, leaving the King of Ava with only the Central and Northern Areas of Burma as his domain. Pegu was placed under a commissioner, Major Arthur Phayre, who had already seen service in Tenasserim and Arakan. A scholar with unrivalled knowledge of the Burmese language and people, he was later to write the first history of Burma in the English language. In 1862 when the divisions of Pegu, Arakan and the Tenasserim were amalgamated to form British Burma and made a province of the Indian empire, Phayre was appointed chief commissioner. It was to this high official that Lewin wrote in 1865, asking for an appointment in the Burma commission, though having no one to pull strings for him in that quarter he saw little hope of obtaining it.

For a time Burma filled his thought. Already fluent in Urdu, Hindi and Bengali, he now began to apply himself to the study of Burmese, and in June after a bad bout of malaria went for a sail in the *Foam* on his Doctor's orders two hundred miles down the coast to Cox's Bazar, a town of timber houses which was like a fragment of Burma transplanted. Both sexes sauntered in the streets wearing bright-coloured *longyis*, the women smoking big white cheroots. The air was pungent with the odour of *ngapi*, the condiment made of rotted prawns, which the Burmese consider an indispensable accompaniment of good cuisine. Saffron-robed Buddhist *hpongyis* walked silently on sandalled feet."

We may recall that in 1765 Robert Clive cleverly manipulated matters and managed to acquire the Diwani (revenue or zamindari administration) of the three eastern subahs (provinces) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, from the Delhi Emperor Shah Alam for a mere 26 lakh rupias. Lewin's biographer Whitehead in *Thangliena* writes about the situation obtaining then in Bengal and Burma, including Assam. Assam was separated in 1874 from Bengal and made into a separate province. In 1905 it had to revert to being joined with Bengal. In November 1885 the Viceroy gave an ultimatum to the 26-year old King Theebaw to give up the sovereignty of his country and accept to become a feudatory like the rulers of the native states of India. On the King's refusal the British conquered Burma in 1886.

K.R.N. Swamy in "Mughals, Maharajas and the Mahatma" writes: "Initially the ex-King the 'prisoner-guest' was kept at Madras for a few months, as his chief Queen Supalayat, was expecting a child. When the baby was born, Theebaw ordered a gold platter three feet in diameter and studded with rubies, for the naming ceremonies. On April 16, 1886, the refugees landed at Ratnagiri, on the west coast of India, where two large houses had been prepared for them."

"There is no doubt that the former monarch, because of his confinement in the remote township of Ratnagiri, was forced to while away his time in idleness for three decades, writing appeal after appeal to the British, to ameliorate his lot. He even tried to meet King George V, when the monarch came to India for the Delhi Durbar in 1911. But his request was not granted. His Chief Queen, Supalayat, was a lady who never forgave the British nor forgot that she was once the Queen of Burma and tried to maintain the immediate circles surrounding her and her husband, in the manner of a miniature court. Menials had to crawl on all fours when approaching the King and for decades, the first thing the Queen did in the morning, was to crawl before Theebaw with offerings of flowers, after which she was allowed to stand or sit as he desired.

Theebaw spent 30 years in Ratnagiri and his last days were passed in a new mansion (at present known as Theebaw's Palace), built for him in 1910. This double-storeyed house with 15 living rooms, a Durbar Hall and outhouses for 60 servants, was built at a cost of 100,000 to 125,000 rupees. This huge establishment, which numbered 161 members, proved a huge drain on his allowance. Even otherwise, the ex-King had not managed his treasures carefully and according to the late Shitur, squandered away all his jewels within a decade of his arrival in Ratnagiri, mostly to avaricious moneylenders. The eminent historian, W.H. Desai, quoted an instance when a jewel worth more than 2 lakhs of rupees was sold for less than 40,000 rupees. The establishment charges for King Theebaw were to be limited to Rs. 46,794 per annum. Despite this, towards the end of the 19th century, the Government of India was forced to pass a law 'incapacitating Theebaw from binding himself by contract', so that no moneylender could cheat him. A committee was appointed to manage his wealth and allowance and finally, when Theebaw died, necessitating his family's return to Burma, Rs. 39,000 was held in trust for them. (A ruby called the Theebaw ruby, of 24.82 carats, appeared in the market in 1937 and decades later, was bought by Van Cleef and Arpels on May 27, 1971. It is not known as to whether it is the same as the *Ngamauk*)."

The British Parliament passed the Regulatory Act of 1773 and thereby created a Governor General of Fort William (Calcutta) and Council of 4 for a period of five years. Warren Hastings who was Governor of Bengal then became Governor General in 1776. Pitt, the Younger, passed the India Act in 1784 imposing State control upon the East India Company. The second son of Queen Victoria, the Duke of Edinburgh married Princess Marie, the daughter of the Czar of Russia amid much pomp and splendour in St. Petersburg on 23 January 1874. The Emperors of Prussia and France also attended. Soon a quarrel developed between Queen Victoria and her

daughter-in-law the Dutches of Edinburgh on a question of precedence at court functions, culminating in Victoria's desire to have the title of Empress. "Empress" of Australia or Canada would invite redicule, as these colonies were then little better than wildernesses. To be the Empress of India, she felt was more suitable, as Emperors were not alien to Indian traditions and scarcely twenty years had passed since the last of the Mughal emperors had been deposed."

"But when she broached the matter to the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, he was not at all enthusiastic. There had been some question of this in 1858, when India had been brought under the Crown after the Sepoy Mutiny and Disraeli had supported it in principle. But in 1876, the moment was unfavourable....." "..... The House of Lords was more adamant. The Government obtained 137 votes in favour of the title and 91 votes were cast against the bid including that of Lord Shaftesbury and eight Dukes. Symbolic of public opinion was the comment in the *Saturday Review,* which termed the title a 'vulgar and impolitic appellation'. The Queen, however, was overjoyed to know the result. When at last she had the title, she wrote to the Prime Minister a letter of thanks, signing it, 'Victoria Regina et Imperatrix', with childlike delight..... Ironically, her becoming an Empress had not been conveyed to her son, the Prince of Wales, touring India at the time and he was furious that, despite being the heir apparent, such a decision had been taken without him being informed."

"In India, accompanied by salvoes of artillery, the Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India was made in Delhi, in the presence of the Viceroy and the great feudatories of the Empire, on January 1, 1877. A banner and medal were given to each of the Indian princes to commemorate the event and four of the most important rulers were granted the right to have 21 salvoes fired in their honour during ceremonies, just like the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Viceregal dignity was raised to 31 salvoes. This latter step caused some disappointment among princes like Scindia who had hitherto been privileged to hold higher rank than the Viceroy in his native dominions and equal rank with him elsewhere, but now found himself deprived of this right." (Excerpts are from "Mughals Maharajas and the Mahatma" by K.R.N. Swamy).

The "Indian Mutiny" was suppressed by the end of 1858 and the Government was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown. Lord Canning who was already Governor General became the first Viceroy and Governor General under the Crown. In November 1858 he announced the Queen's offer of mercy and respect for religion and hereditary title etc.

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Before the annexation by the British in 1860, the Chakma Raja's territory of Chadigang was vast and the East India Company representatives have mentioned it more than once in their records. Thomas Herbert Lewin was posted as acting Superintendent of the Hill Tribes in the 1860s. Lewin's biographer John Whitehead

in *Thangliena* mentions the extent of the Hill Tracts as "comprising some 7000 sq. miles of wild hill country." Some thirty years later, Commissioner Oldham's letter dated 19 August, 1891 to the Chief Secretary of Bengal refers to the area of the Hill Tracts as 6000 sq. miles. And in 1901, the area of the Tracts was referred to as being 5,138 square miles. Subsequently it was reduced further to 5,093 square miles by ceding a strip of land (inclusive of Demagri) along the eastern border to the then Lushai Hills district of Assam. Raja Nalinaksha Roy, the Chakma Raja, along with the other two chiefs, declares the extent of the Hill Tracts as 5138 sq miles in their joint memorandum to Pakistan's Governor General Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah in March 1948 in Chittagong and refers to the Hill Tracts more than once as our "country", not in the sense of sovereignty but separateness of entity as Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

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In 1872 in the first Census held in the more than 6000 sq mile Hill Tracts there were 63,054 souls. The population figures of 1881 were 101,597, in 1891 107,286, and in 1901 124,762. In 1901, the population density and the literacy figures and the territories of the three Kings totalling 5138 sq miles were: Chakma Territory 2,499 square miles, population 48,721, density of population 20 per square mile, literate 3,290. *Bohmong* Territory 1,935 square miles, population 44,075, density of population 21 per square mile, literate 1,689. *Mong* Territory 704 square miles, population 37,898, density of population 58 per square mile, literate 597. The population continued to grow. In 1911 it was 153,830, in 1921 it was 173,243, in 1931 212,922, in 1941 247,053, in 1951 287,273 and in 1961 395,679. The 1974 census showed 507,378. In 1991 the number exceeded one million. The percentage of literates was always high, and now it was the highest in the country at 60%.

The people have serious reservations about the latest census figures arrived at by the Bangladesh authorities. They are of the opinion that the population of the hillpeople has been deliberately under enumerated. It is also noteworthy that when the count was taken 70,000 or more refugees were sheltering in the camps in Tripura, India. They had subsequently returned to the Hill Tracts but have been omitted from the count. The latest census, however, confirms that a whole tribe, the Riyang, is no longer living on their ancestral land in the northern Hill Tracts, and one of the Lushai groups has also disappeared, reducing the 13 peoples to 11. They have vanished, the whole lot of them. Is this a portent and an indication of the future when one by one the indigenous peoples will disappear from the face of the Hill Tracts, some a little earlier and others a little later? Let us hope not.

A chart of the proportion of Bengalis vis-à-vis the indigenous population based on figures from "A statistical account of Bengal" by Hunter, "East Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers 1909" (Hutchinson), Pierre Bessaignet's "Tribesmen of the Chittagong Hill Tracts" and Bangladesh Statistics show:

S.No.	Year	Indigenous People		Bengali		Total
		Population	Percetage of Total	Population	Percentage of Total	
1	1872	61957	98%	1097	2%	63054
2	1901	116000	93%	8762	7%	124762
3	1959	261538	91%	26150	9%	287688
4	1981	441776	59%	304873	41%	746649
5	1991	501144	51.43%	473301	48.57%	1063150

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics also shows:

Year	Tribal (T)	Non-Tribal (N/T)	Ratio (T:N/T)	Total
1951	2,61,538	26.150	91:09	2,87,688
1974	4,49,315	58,884	88:12	5,08,199

In records of Mughal times the Tracts was called Kapas Mahal (Cotton Territory) and later Jumbanga. In 1713 A.D., the Raja of Chakma paid a one-time tribute of 11 maunds of cotton to the Mughal Emperor. Before this date the Chakma Kings were totally independent. In 1860 under Act XXII, this area was formed into a separate administrative unit under a superintendent with headquarters at Chandraghona where now exists the largest Paper Mill in Asia. The Tracts was taken out of the civil, criminal and revenue jurisdiction of the Chittagong District, to which it had arrogated its nominal suzerainty sometime after the Company acquired Chittagong. Eight years later, in 1868, the headquarters was shifted to Rangamati.

A Survey Report of 1904 describes the general topography as "a mass of hills, ravines and cliffs, covered with dense bamboo trees and creepers. The mountains are steep and difficult of ascent. They rise in tapering masses and are very narrow at the ridges. The highest hills, in the southern area, are Keokradong (4,034 feet) and Pyramid Hill (3,216 feet)." The principal river, the Karnafuli, flower in ear or earring in Sanskrit, rises in the hills north of Lungleh in Mizoram, and flows into the Bay of Bengal, past the town of Chittagong 170 miles away. In the north, separating the Hill Tracts from the Tripura State is the small river, Feni. Two other rivers, which also flow into the Bay of Bengal, are in the southern Tracts – the Sangu and Matamuri.

One fourth of the area is government-reserved forest with an abundance of tropical hard wood such as teak, gamar and garjan, and vast quantities of bamboo. And until recently there was abundant wildlife – from wild elephants to tigers, the one horned rhinoceros, bears, deer of many types and an infinite variety of birds. The hillmen are keen *shikaris*. There was a Pankhua headman, Lenjoi, who was mauled by a bear in 1948 while out hunting with his muzzle-loading shotgun. Some of these guns would delight many a museum curator. He went about with a noseless face, and lips thick and awry – the result of patchwork surgery. The Surgeon General in Dhaka then, Major Allison had done the best he could, considering the patient had come to

him pretty late, and that too at my father's insistence. In the Tracts it was not unusual to find someone carrying mementos of unfriendly encounters with some feral denizen of the jungle.

Bamboo is the backbone of the hillpersons' culture. His house is of bamboo, he eats bamboo shoots, he stores his grain in bamboo baskets, he carries his belongings and produce in bamboo *kallongs*, oil and water in bamboo tubes; his flute and the girls' *khengrang* are no exceptions. The women's handloom is of bamboo, the *tagal* or flat-ended knife has a bamboo handle, as is the *badal* or bowlike catapult. He measures time by bamboo length; the sun, two bamboos high roughly corresponding to ten in the morning. Seasonally he leaves home for a spell of *kattan* in the reserved forests where on payment of a nominal royalty he cuts and rafts bamboo by the hundreds of thousands. Today the majority is floated down the lake to the giant paper mill at Chandraghona and to the port city of Chittagong, after transhipment by mechanized cranes at the hydel dam at Kaptai.

Tropical vegetation, abundant rainfall, averaging a 100 inches annually, comparatively low population density, coupled with the mountainous nature of the terrain, have dictated the particular ecological pattern of centuries. *Jumming* – slash and burn agriculture, shifting cultivation, swidden, or operation scorched earth, is not unique to the Hill Tracts. It is prevalent in similar situations in South and Southeast Asia, Africa, South and Central America. This form of agriculture is not only the indigenous but the only form of land culture known in the Tracts until plough cultivation was first introduced by Maharaja Dhuram Bux Khan, the then Raja of Chakma. But the spread of plough cultivation was characteristically slow (for hillmen are by nature conservative and suspicious of innovations) and the extent was pretty limited anyhow by the inherent topographical features of the area.

The Chakma is generally a cheerful soul, friendly and hospitable and by nature improvident, with no thought for the morrow. He is very independent of spirit, though respectful to his elders and leaders, and averse to routine work. He is his own man and even if he is driven to subsisting on wild roots for three months in the year whenever the *jum* harvest is poor, he prefers that to taking up a low salaried job, and as for working as a domestic servant he considers it below his dignity. Yet he will work extremely hard in his *jum* or patch of rice paddy or trek miles to cut bamboos or trees to sell in the bazars.

He is fond of *madh*, an alcoholic spirit distilled from rice, or *jagara* and k*anji* – fermented rice beer. He will smoke his bamboo daba (hookah) and is ever ready to share a joke, play the flute or sing an *uba* git. He pays woman the compliment of counting time spent away from home by nights. He has been away from home three nights, he would say for instance, not three days. Possibly he misses "home," at night rather more. He designates the right bank of a river or a stream by facing the source rather than the mouth – may be a hangover from a thousand years of travelling up rivers.

A British administrator once asked a Chakma why he did not save some of his earnings for a rainy day. "When it is time for sorrow," the man replied, "no amount of money can prevent it. One has to take sorrow in good grace, or joy would not be joy." When the matter was elaborated upon, the man cheerfully replied, "Why? But here's my bank all around me." And he indicated the hills. "There are enough hills for my jum, bamboo enough for all my needs. There are plenty of herbs for the village doctor to fix me up if he can, when I'm ill. There are wild roots and bamboo shoots, and wild arum if there's a famine. And there's no dearth of wild boar and deer either." Such a defence was impregnable, not merely because it was true, but because of the attitude to life – and wealth. Here there were neither Joneses to keep up with nor the desire to do so. Here was an acceptance born of faith – in nature, and in oneself.

As is often the case with the Mongolian race, many babies are born with a patch of blue on their bottoms that, however, usually disappears at childhood. Another trait of the hillpeople is a distaste for milk. Once they are weaned, children are rarely given or want milk, in the belief that the amount imbibed at one's mother's breast is enough to last a lifetime. They are not too fastidious about food and eat snake, frog, snail, fish, fresh and dried – and now and again a bit of elephant, whenever available, and venison which is popular. Pork is widely eaten, and the water buffalo is sometimes partaken of at wedding feasts. Rodents and dogs are eaten by some small indigenous groups who however shun monkeys, cats and the like; horses, possibly because they are not available, are outside the pale. A typical meal consists of rice, mashed chillies, dried or fresh fish and vegetables, but little spice is used, preference being for food boiled, broiled or grilled. Before cooking, fish is cleaned thoroughly. However, one of the exotic groups chides the Chakma for this exercise in redundancy. Has the fish not been washed its whole life long, he reasons, and he certainly sounds logical.

A Chakma house, like most hillmen's houses in the Tracts, is made of bamboo with the sun grass or *kuruk* leaf thatch and is raised on stilts. A notched log, the *sangu* leads one up to the latticed open terrace, *ijor*, where a jar of water is always found for the visitor to wash his feet. It is a split-level house, and the veranda, *chana*, is a level higher than the terrace, while the rest of the rooms leading off from the veranda are on a still higher level in the hierarchy of elevation. The house usually has an eastern aspect.

Though joint families were in vogue some hundred years ago, as the *khabang*, the headdress was, nowadays usually a young man separates (becomes *belak*) soon after marriage. And this also entails economically severing the apron strings because he selects and cultivates his own jum and pays his own tax. Bachelors, widows, widowers and the shaman are by custom exempted from paying jum tax. Commissioner Oldham's letter dated 19 August 1891, to the Chief Secretary of Bengal mentions that a householder who resides in a certain mauza pays full jum tax (earlier capitation tax) and in addition half the tax to the headman of the other mauza where he has a jum. Such a Jumma is a "parkulya." In Oldham's days he paid full tax (Rs. 4/-) to his own Raja and only a small tax (Rs. 1/-) where he has cut a jum in the other Raja's territory. Later, he had to pay full tax to the other Raja as well. In

the latter days of British rule, if a householder did not jum, he then did not pay jum tax but his name was enrolled in the Tauzi (annual register) with the comment "no jum."

Genkhulis are wandering singers with a crude violin and a repertoire of Chakma history, lore and love, called *uba git*, high song or song of the young. One epic song like *Chadigang Chara* (leaving Chittagong) is considered inauspicious for the host if sung indoors and the Genkhuli therefore sings this historic epic outside the village limits. Bijoygiri's expedition of conquest, and the King's General Radhamon's love for Dhanpadi which is one of the most famous of the historical pieces are most popular among the Chakmas.

Family planning is not altogether unknown but when a child is born, be it the first or the eighth, there is rejoicing and the advent is solemnized with gunfire – odd number for girls and even number for boys. The grandfather or an uncle would bring out the ancient muzzleloader, ram in the powder and let fly into the sky. The new mother is unclean until she goes to the river and bathes – usually she does so under her own steam the same day – and is purified with a herbal sprinkling of *ghila–kaju–pani* which is also sprinkled around inside the house. The other women in the village come to call and bring her tasty dishes for the next few days.

The village *ojha buri* is the midwife who presides over delivery cases and prescribes the juice of a mashed railway train ticket to hasten sluggish delivery. If there is protracted labour pain, the woman swallows this juice and hopes for the best. However, as many people have never seen a train and cannot find the elixir, some massage and an occasional herbal medicine are also administered at times as substitutes for the rare railway ticket. The umbilical cord is severed with a sharp slice of bamboo. It seems to be a safe surgical instrument for septicaemia does not result, possibly due to an absence of germs in the atmosphere. It is believed that the dried cord in the hand of an unscrupulous person can be used to call down the evil eye on the baby, so the cord is carefully stashed away in some hidden corner of the house or stealthily buried in the premises.

The Buddha, having preached tolerance, is not expected to be jealous. So, though Buddhists, Chakmas have not discarded some of their animistic practices. They feel that there can be coexistence amongst the gods and goddesses of whom there are fourteen. They are – Ganga, Beattara, Parameshwari, Hatya, Matya, Rakhanya, Bar-Shialya, Bhut, Jhalla Kumari, Phul Kamal, Nil Kamal, Sowdagar and Along–langalya. These fourteen deities are of course relegated to positions far below that of the Buddha. They are invoked for protection, and sometimes shamanist practices are resorted to. These may originally have been connected with tantric practices, for the Chakmas in the earlier days appear to have been Mahayana Buddhists.

One of the most important pujas of the Chakmas is Gung (River) Puja or *Thanmana*. The Burmese have classified the Chakmas, Marmas and other peoples living alongside rivers or streams as *Khyongtha* (children of the river), in contra-distinction to the Lushai – Kuki or Mizo group (such as the Pankhua and

Bawm/Banjogi), whom they call *Tonghtha* (children of the hills). Thanmana is performed in December or January after the jum site is selected but before actual cutting of the forest starts. The rituals of propitiation are performed with the objective of obtaining the protection and benediction of the goddess for their welfare and for a good harvest.

The Khisas, karbaris and village elders convoke a meeting of all the family heads to fix a date for the puja. Everyone contributes according to his financial standing and they collect pigs, goats and sundry items. The site selected for the offering to the goddess is on the bank of a river or near the confluence of two streams. On the appointed day the villagers converge on the spot in the morning with rice, popcorn and cooked chicken, all packed in plantain leaves. The puja is performed and the sacrificial flesh is cooked in the shade of a tree. The cooked meat is then distributed to all, including wayfarers who may have joined, and all settle down to a jolly good feast by the riverside.

After the meal the villagers gather around the shaman, or ojha or baidya as he is variously called – who is invited one day earlier with a bottle of country liquor – and ask him to interpret the omens, portents and auguries that he has observed at the puja. The witch doctor cum priest acts as an intermediary between ordinary mortals and the goddess, and answers the questions. He then announces to the congregation the dreams he had had the night before. Most people listen to him solemnly, though these dreams may have resulted after he had drunk himself insensible. But then, the alcohol may have made him suprasensible and more receptive to extra sensory communication.

When a person is possessed by an evil spirit the witch doctor resorts to exorcism. The afflicted person is made to sit and hold a hibiscus flower. The shaman or sometimes the Chakma priest called *Raoli or "Lori"* recites mantras until the possessed begins to shake and shiver as if with ague and enters a trance. The shaman chanting loudly beats time on a gong or brass disc and fires questions at the spirit. It is commanded to disclose its identity and nature, and the means by which it may be expelled. When the "possessed" becomes weak and tired the shaman stops his activities in the occult, but repeats the process again the next day. He continues for five or six days until he has obtained all the answers from the spirit and driven it away. In the case of a less serious nature amulets and charms are given to the afflicted person to wear. Sometimes pujas have to be performed entailing the sacrifice of a black rooster. If a person has a bout of fainting fits or loses consciousness while working on his *jum*, it is presumed that some evil spirit has taken possession of him (probably the spirit is called heat-stroke in another lexicon). The shaman is summoned to extricate the victim from the vicious hold of the spirit. He soaks a piece of cloth in mustard oil, places it on a green leaf, chants mantras and blows on the leaf seven times. After this the cotton is squeezed into the victim's mouth. This somehow discomfits the spirit and it promptly takes flight.

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CHAPTER III

The Chakma Rajas

The genesis of the line of the Chakma Rajas, like that of many others, is traced back to antiquity, where it becomes more legendary than historical. There is the traditional beginning with the story of a ruler in an ancient land, who belonged to the solar race. Such a beginning, however, does not obfuscate the reality of the Chakma rulers and the Chakma nation since centuries past, as there are several references to them in a variety of historical literature covering the area and its neighbouring countries. In the "Dengyawadi Aradafing" and the "Chuijang Kyatha," histories of Arakan and Burma, references are found of ancient Chakma kings who fought the kings of Burma and Arakan, and whose kingdom at one time was one of the three in which Burma was then divided. References to the Chakma kings are also found in the *Rajmala*, the history of the Tripura Raj family. Other sources of information include the "*History of the Chakma Raj Family*", compiled by my grandfather Raja Bhuvan Mohan Roy in 1919, tracing our origin to the Shakyas, the race to which the historical Gautama Buddha belonged, and Biraj Mohan Dewan's *"Chakma jatir itibritti"* (History of the Chakma Nation). In 16th century Portuguese maps of the area the Hill Tracts and much of Chittagong is shown as "Chacomas" (Chakmas).

Subir Bhaumik in his book *Crossfire* writes: "The expansion of Chakma power into the Chittagong Hill Tracts began with the great northward sweep of the tribe from Arakans between the ninth and eleven centuries AD – a fact recorded in the Chittagong Chara Pala, one of the favourite ballads of the tribe. The Chakma Rajamala (record of rulers) lists twenty-three Kings of the Chakmas, ending with the last sovereign, Tridib Roy (now Pakistasn's Ambassador to Argentina)."

The indigenous peoples and nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts were wholly independent, leading their traditional lives under their traditional leaders from time immemorial. The first tenuous contacts with the outside world began in the time of the later Mughals, before which the region was terra incognita. Akbar the Great only began his annexation of Bengal in 1574. Shah Jahan appointed his son Shah Shuja as Governor of Bengal in 1639, and Shaista Khan annexed Chittagong in 1660. In any case, it is a historical fact that the larger parts of Chittagong and the Hill Tracts did not form part of the diwani of Chittagong that was transferred by the Mughals to the East India Company.

The difficulty, in the absence of detailed authentic records, is to establish where legend ends and history begins. One of the epic songs says that long ago there reigned at a place called Champanagar (some say in Magadha, modern Bihar) a Kshatriya King of the solar race. He had two sons – Bijoygiri and Samargiri. Bijoygiri, at the head of an army, set forth in conquest of a new world and after crossing the river Meghna he marched on the Arakanese forces and defeated them.

When he was preparing to return, news reached him that his younger brother Samargiri had usurped the throne. Bijoygiri therefore settled down in his new kingdom and married an "Ari" lady. His new-found kingdom was in the neighbourhood of the Naf River, on the borders of present day Chittagong District with Burma. They wore the sacred thread *paita* around their waist during battle. They were *Paitadhari Kshatriyas* according to genkhulis.

Bijoygiri gave his soldiers the option to return home or to remain with him. Most stayed back and with his permission intermarried with the Arakanese and accepted Buddhism. They subsequently migrated to the valley of the Matamuri River. Some historians consider Bijoygiri's conquest to have occurred in 1630 A.D. The last of the Champanagar Kings was Shatua nicknamed Pagla Raja (the mad king). He was assassinated and most of the people fearing the consequences moved farther north into the hills and settled in the neighbourhood of Rangunea.

Dissensions among the people and their lack of a king to whom they might refer their difficulties, finally prompted them to install one of Bijoygiri's Barons who had married a royal princess, as the King. In course of time certain powerful Barons or Dewans were put in charge of a Taluk by the king, who paid his assessment of revenues to the king but enjoyed full criminal and civil powers, death sentences alone being referred to the ruler.

The Dewan collected a sum of Rs. 3/- annually as capitation tax and as the representative of the ruler was offered first fruits and the haunch of deer or wild boar killed in the hunt. The ruler still gets the major share of the jum tax and grove land (hill side land) rents and also the haunch of wild game. On the occasion of a marriage in the Dewan's family each household had to pay one rupee and supply a certain amount of food and liquor for the general feasting. A woman wanting to use certain items of jewellery, normally reserved for the aristocracy, had to obtain exemption by paying a certain fee to the Dewan. The Dewan in turn paid a certain portion of the taxes to his overlord, the King.

After Bijoygiri there is mention of some others, then we come to Raja Chaman Khan, 1650, who was succeeded by Raja Zallal Khan. According to British records, "the Rajahs of the Chittagong Hills were all independent, paid no tribute or revenue to the Mughal Emperor until Maghi Year 1077M.S., 1713 A.D., when Rajah Zallal Khan obtained permission from Delhi Emperor Farruksiyar (1713-1719) to allow the Beparees of the lowland to trade with the Joomeahs on payment of a tribute in cotton." This constituted a one-time payment of eleven maunds of the short staple cotton grown in the jums of the Hill Tracts. The hillpeople's requirements from the plains, in the main, were salt and kerosene oil. The latter was more popular than the viscous extract from the Garjan, a hardwood tree that grew at random in the Tracts.

Raja Mogalya had two sons, Jubal Khan and Fateh Khan. Raja Jubal Khan and his general Kalu Khan Sardar fought a great many battles with the Nawab. In these battles two big guns (cannon) were captured, and named Kalu Khan and Fateh

Khan. The latter is still mounted outside the Chakma Rajbari, at Rangamati. The other cannon called Kalu Khan had been accidentally dropped in the Karnafuli River at old Rangamati, when it was being transported from the last Chakma capital, Rajanagar, Rangunea to the new capital.

According to British records, in "a proclamation of the 6th Sraban, 1170, B.S., corresponding with 1763 of the Christian Era, Harry Verelst, Chief of the Chittagong Council of the period, declared that it had been proved to his satisfaction that all the hills from the Fenny to the Sungoo and from the Nizampore road (apparently a road following the course of the present Dacca road) to the hills of the Kuki Rajah pertained to Raja Shair Must Khan, the Chakma Rajah."

Jubal Khan, whom the English referred to as Zallal Khan, died childless and was succeeded by his brother Fateh Khan. His son Shermust Khan became Raja after him in 1737, and being childless adopted Shukdev Roy who became Raja after his death, in 1767. He made territorial settlement of vast lands in Chittagong, called Taraf Shukdev. After Shukdev, who died childless, Sher Daulat Khan became Raja in 1776 A.D. He was the son of Rahmat Khan, the second son of Fateh Khan. He fought relentless wars with the English.

At the time of Delhi Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-1748) the trade treaty was renewed on payment of a cotton tribute. British records note: "The tribute was not regularly paid for sometime. In 1737 A.D., it was revived by Shair Must Khan of Joomeah Bangoo and paid to Government ..... These tributes were regularly paid till 1775 A.D. but in 1776 A.D., Shair Daulat, the then Rajah, withheld both the tributes and began to plunder the golahs (store houses) of Ragoonah, etc... For this, two attempts were made to apprehend him in 1777 A.D., and 1780 A.D., by Lane and Turner, respectively to no purpose. In 1782 A.D., Jan Bux Khan, son of Shair Daulat, became Rajah, but he paid a very small portion of the tribute that was due from him."

Sher Daulat's son Jan Bux Khan succeeded him. He fought many wars with the English, in 1782, 1783 and 1784. As the Jummas were suffering many privations due to the imposition of a blockade Jan Bux agreed to sign a Peace Treaty. According to the English, in 1787, "he made his submissions to the Governor-General at Fort William, Calcutta and agreed to keep the peace in the Hill Territory and pay an annual tribute in cotton."

In the "History of Chittagong" (pages 79 and 80) Syed Murtaza Ali writes, "Although harassed occasionally by the hillpeople Chittagong settled soon down into a well regulated district. In 1764 Chakma Chiefs Sher Daulat Khan and Ranu Khan (the latter was actually a Dewan and a General of Sher Daulat Khan) carried incursions into Chittagong but were put down." In the same chapter of the book Syed Murtaza Ali says a little later, "In 1784 Jan Baksha, the Chakma Chief, greatly disturbed the peace of the border. But the Government prompted mainly by commercial consideration (as cotton was grown largely by the Chakmas) adopted a

conciliatory policy. Jan Baksha Khan agreed to accept the suzerainty of the British and promised to deliver 500 maunds of hill cotton as annual tribute."

The title of Khan, which the Chakma Kings used is of Central Asian origin. The Chakmas belong to the Mongolian race that left its mark on history, particularly in the 13th century. Temujin, after a number of campaigns within Mongolia itself, became the paramount chief of all the Mongols and came to be known as Genghis Khan. By 1205 he had consolidated his position, having unified the Mongols, and embarked on his various campaigns of conquest subjugating peoples and territories from the Pacific to the Adriatic. His grandson Kublai Khan ruled over perhaps the greatest empire in history. Coleridge immortalized him with his poem: " In Zanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure-dome decree." Marco Polo, who spent about twenty-eight years in Kublai Khan's court, also left colourful accounts of the time and of life at court.

The founder of the Mughal dynasty Zaheeruddin Babar was born some 30 miles from Farghana, present day Uzbekistan in 1483. He defeated the Afghan Sultan of Delhi and established the Mughal Empire in 1526. Babar was a Timurid, and a direct and proud descendant of Genghis on his mother's side and the Tatar king Taimur (meaning Man of Iron) Lane on his father's side. Taimur had entered India at the end of the 14th Century. Babar conquered Kabul and made it his capital. After invading Hindustan and defeating Ibrahim Lodhi he made Delhi his capital. Although he treated Lodhi's family well the defeated King's mother tried to poison Babar by suborning one of the royal chefs, and almost succeeded. Babar became violently ill but recovered because fortuitously the cook had reduced the amount of poison while mixing it with the food that Babar had ingested. He recovered fully, and later died at the age of 47 in Delhi in 1530. Before him the conquerors of Kabul were Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Taimurlame; and later the British, who subsequently suffered defeat and retreated. The last foreign invader to conquer Kabul was the USSR. However, they too had to leave. The latest conqueror on 13 November 2001, was the Northern Alliance (Afghans) but backed by the United States and its allies, or the US and allies backed (or fronted) by the Northern Alliance.

In the comparatively civilized Mughal times, the occasional payment of tribute was more a token of suzerainty, rather than an imposition of sovereignty, as in the case of the Mughals vis a vis the Chakma Rajas, who were independent. In the earlier and more barbarous eras, however, they were a severe imposition that brooked no leniency. The Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Theodosius II, whose territory was extensive and covered the greater part of Europe, had to pay an annual tribute of 300 kilos of gold to Attila the Hun, the Central Asian conqueror, in the early 5th Century, and was left in peace. However, when he defaulted, Attila, known in Europe as "The scourge of God," swept down and ruthlessly devastated towns and hamlets on the Danube, killing, plundering and ravaging. After defeating the Emperor, Attila increased the tribute to 900 kilos of gold each year. In 445 Attila attacked the Eastern Empire. In 451 he invaded Gaul, in 452 Italy. On his death after his wedding feast in 453, his empire ended.

And a thousand years later, during Humayun's interregnum, Sher Shah Suri having defeated the Mughal Emperor at the battle of Kanauj in 1540 invaded Bengal and extracted a tribute of 3 lakh rupias from Sultan Mahmud with a promise of 6 lakhs more. When Mahmud refused to pay up Suri invaded a second time and collected the remainder of the tribute. He sent his commander Nogazil to capture the town of Chittagong, which he accomplished in October 1537.

On Jan Bux Khan's death, his eldest son Raja Tabbar Khan succeeded him. He dug a huge tank, "Dighi", in Rangunea. Beside its northern bank, many years later, his descendant Raja Bhuvan built a High School for the local Bengali students. The school has been named after him, and remains so to this day. Raja Tabbar Khan had his second capital at Rangamati, situated on a prominence on the west bank of the river Karnafuli that Buchanan describes mistakenly in 1798 as his principal residence, the "Rajar bary, the Prince's house." During the reign of Tabbar Khan, Francis Buchanan, a Scots doctor, journeyed into the Tracts as a surveyor. His perspicacious account of his experiences is called "Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798)," and is edited by Prof. Willem van Schendel from the Erasmus University, Rotterdam. Buchanan writes:

"The Subjects, or tribe, of Kaug-la-pru are by the Bengalese named Joome [a,] and a tradition prevails, that about 40 years ago they came to their present residence from the Dominions of Rossawn or Arakan. These Joomeas are tributary to the Company, and differ from the Chakma, who are subject to Taub-boka Rajah. All these Joomea and Moroong pay tribute to the Pow-mang. The proper title of this Chief of the Joomea is Pow-mang-gre, or Great Captain. His eldest Son, and apparent Heir, is named Sa-da pru, Pru, or white, being the family name."

Buchanan's account establishes that "In the 1790s Kaung Hla Hpru lived at Sualok near Bandorbon. Sa Taing Hpru appears to be Kaung Hla Hpru's second son, his eldest, Sa Da Hpru having predeceased his father." (A footnote explains - "After the British annexation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1860, this title survived as that of the 'Bohmong Chief.' According to Hutchinson, the Mughals drove Kaung Hla Hpru to Arakan in 1756. In 1774, owing to oppression from the Arakan court, he returned to the Chittagong district, and established himself with his followers at Ramu, Idgor and along the Matamuhuri River. He settled at 'Maxikhal' on the Shongu River in 1804. After his death in 1819 he was succeeded by his son Sa Taing Hpru, who moved to Bandorbon in 1822, and died in 1840. R.H. Sneyd Hutchinson, Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers: Chittagong Hill Tracts (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1909)....."

"Soon after passing these sacred hills (Chitmarang), we came to a few huts placed on the south bank, inhabited by Chakma, and said to belong to a choky or customhouse, where Taubboka collects some duties on cotton. The hills in many places are cleared for jooms, and on the levels there are small Chakma villages, which in general are surrounded by many plantain trees. The country however

deserves a much better cultivation, and would no doubt produce cotton, sugar, coffee, indigo, and other valuable plants, as well as the hilly islands of the West Indies .....

At Seetaka gaut the Chakmas worship a spirit named Taung-Mang, or Prince of the Mountains. The men have adopted the dress of the Bengalese, and the women the ornaments of the Hindu females; but the sex still cuts, and dyes their clothes, after the Burma fashion. Like the Joomeas and Moroong, they eat every thing; and have no objection to eat with the individuals of these nations: but they do not intermarry. Their principal men have slaves: but these are chiefly Tiperah, it not being among them lawful to have a Chakma in that debased situation.....

Immediately below its mouth is a detached hill of some length, on which formerly resided Roonooka, chief Dewan to the Rajah, and a man of importance, much beloved both by the Chakmas and Bengalese. During the dispute, that took place between the Resident at Chittagong and the Chakmas, an attempt had been made by these poor people to fortify this hill .....

At six o'clock in the evening I stopped at the principal residence of Taubboka, which by the Bengalese is commonly called Rajar bary, or the Princes house, and is situated on the right bank of the river, a little above the mouth of a rivulet named Rangamati. The natives say, that, by a road leading across these hills, it takes from sunrise till noon to go from hence to the house of Taubokka in Runganea. Between this and these hills live many Koongkies, or Lang-ga who are tributary to the Rajah. About a mile above the chief's house live the two sons of Roonooka, whom I mentioned as having been a powerful man among the Chakmas. Two or three years ago, in consequence of having been affronted, he retired to Dua-cherry on the Sunkar, and killed himself by poison. His sons are named Chundunka and Ruttunka, and on account of their father are much respected among the people.....

At Kazalung I found the people extremely curious to see an European, and the news of my arrival having spread, at night many people from a distance had assembled to get a view. The Chakmas have faces entirely like the Burmas, and are very fair. The men however are fairer than the women, a sign that these last are hardly used. They kept at a distance from me, as the men said owing to their own fears, and not to any aversion the men have to their women being seen .....

At seven in the evening we came opposite to two houses, built on the right bank on a point between two rivulets. Here are 14 or 15 Chakmas, who had come from the Rajah's house to cultivate joom: and here they were to reside till the crop was over. This temporary kind of residence is named a Kummar .....

The whole is the property of Taubboka, who has also considerable possessions on the west side of Ram and Seita moora. It is almost in a state of nature, and were proper cultivation introduced, its value and population might be greatly increased: but this is chiefly the object of Taubboka, whose rent is fixed, and without injustice could not be raised by the Company. As a subject

of the Company he is however entitled to their assistance, in protecting him from the savage tribes by whom he is surrounded: but he has not yet recovered from the fear, occasioned by the attack made on him by the former chief at Chittagong, and wishing to live retired from the eyes of government, is willing rather to submit to temporary depredations, than by his complaints to attract notice ....." "All these people change the place of their abode every two or three years, for the sake of cultivating a new soil, meliorated by rest, and by the ashes of the burned wood." .....

These observations amply demonstrate that the subjects of the Bohmong were tributaries to the East India Company, unlike the Chakmas who were tributaries of their Raja, Tabbar Khan. Buchanan also speaks of the Company's Chief of Chittagong having attacked Tabbar Khan who preferred not to approach the Company for any redressal of wrongs. Also Buchanan informs us that Ranu Khan was "affronted" by the Company and was driven to committing suicide, as a result of which his two sons were greatly respected by the Chakmas. Ranu Khan was a kinsman and clan leader and adviser of the Raja Tabbar Khan. Chandan Khan, one of the sons of Ranu Khan was the father of Gopinath Dewan who would marry the Princess Chikanbibi and be the father of the future Raja Harish Chandra Rai Bahadur.

Buchanan says the Chakmas are "very fair", more than their women who are "hardly used." Nowadays, due to impoverishment and resultant malnutrition, many Chakmas are less hardy and less sturdy of physique than their ancestors. When we were children, the vast majority of Chakmas were fair complexioned and muscular. However, as pointed out by Buchanan, the Chakma women have traditionally been the more industrious sex. The men, like most hillmen, prefer to let the women do most of the hard work, even now.

This form of agriculture, Jum, is ecologically and economically viable and suitable in tropical areas with dense forests, as long as the lands are given a sufficient period of rest for regeneration. However, if the man-land ratio gets skewed on account of population pressure or due to any other factors, and as a consequence the rest period is shortened, then the harvests are not up to the mark. A jum from a virgin patch of ground with good forest cover, or from a well-rested ranya, acre for acre, produced much more than an equivalent plot of rice paddy from plough land. As jum land was not unlimited, and the population was increasing, one had to anticipate and forestall a future shortfall. Due to inherent and natural topographical limitations, plough cultivation in the Hill Tracts could only extend thus far and no farther, despite the East India Company's focus of attention revolving around the generating and collecting of plough revenue. Plough cultivation, however, though not an alternative was at least an auxiliary and supplementary form of agriculture.

While the Company discouraged jumming and encouraged plough cultivation, it did not exert itself sufficiently toward finding alternative forms of land use, like sylviculture or growing pineapple and other tropical fruit in the hills and slopes. Nor did it organize or arrange for the cultivation of palm, rubber or cashew,

nor tea nor coffee, a few initial efforts at large scale tea and rubber plantations having failed. A few experiments at terrace farming were conducted but without success. The slopes were generally too steep, the topsoil friable, the rainfall at an average of over 100 inches too abundant, and stones for revetment walls not readily available.

Cotton was grown in abundance in the jums, as was rice, maize, sesame, and vegetables. The returns from a good harvest were not only enough for the subsistence economy of the indigenous people but provided enough surpluses in cotton, maize and sesame as items for commercial outlets. In course of time the jum cotton would be marketed in Comilla, the capital of Tripura (Tippera) district, acquiring the appellation Real Tippera, (R.T.) cotton. Present day district of Comilla was Tripura, the same name as the native state across the border. There is an analogous situation in Latin America. Because the distinctive straw hats were marketed in Panama, they came to be known as Panama Hats, though they were not made in Panama but in Ecuador.

At Tabbar Khan's death, he being childless, his brother Raja Jabbar Khan succeeded him. His son Maharaja Dharam Bux Khan succeeded him in 1812. During his reign the Dewans were in charge of human taluks and were usually also clan chieftains. Even during the reign of his successor the Rani Kalindi the Taluk Dewans exercised authority over their clans. An East India Company high up, Lord Ulick Brown, says of the system obtaining, that even if a man lived in Calcutta he would still pay the capitation tax to his Chief every year. It went to show that jurisdiction of the Taluk Dewan, and the Chakma Raja was not confined to his territory of Chadigang but was extra-territorial as well – to wherever any of his subjects may choose to live. The traditional bond between the Chakma Raja and his people is not one that is merely territorially induced and confined, it is spiritual as well.

It was Dharam Bux who introduced plough cultivation in the Tracts, and set an example to the hillmen, who hitherto had only practised slash and burn or swidden farming called jum. His reclamation of plough lands from the jungles began from the mouth of the Chengi, a tributary of the Karnafuli about 7 miles north of the Rangamati stream. It extended several miles north–south, parallel to the river Karnafuli to a depth of a mile or two to the east in a rough parallelogram. Then the hill ranges that ran north to south ended the plains. Apart from the help of the hillmen who were expert at cutting forests and jungles, Dharam Bux assiduously reclaimed and cultivated these vast virgin valley lands with the initial help of eight Bengali labourers that he brought over from his plough lands in Rajanagar. At the time of his descendants these lands were known as lots 18, 32, 38, 42, 68, and so on, in British Indian records.

Dharam Bux was the first Chakma Raja to die in the palace (Rajbari) at Rangamati. It was situated just behind the imposing Rajbari that would be built by his great grandson one hundred years later. The site of Dharam Bux's Rajbari was about half a mile downstream of Tabbar Khan's "Rajar bary (Prince's House)." It suffered damage because of a severe storm and the site subsequently became the back garden that we grew up with. Its wafting fragrance and scented blossoms with tropical shrubs and flowers, many planted by father, was one of his favourite havens. The

garden consisted mainly of pyramids, squares and rectangles of flowering shrubs, and some beds of annuals with single bricks as borders, interspersed with patches of mown grass – all connected through paths cosily wide enough for two. In childhood days it was an ideal spot for hide and seek, and later a restful fragrant niche of peace and quiet.

Dharam Bux divided his time between his capital at Rajanagar, Rangunea and his second capital at Rangamati where he had a number of residences. He would sometimes use an elephant but preferred the horse for the twenty odd mile journey. The last shift was to the site where he died barely in his mid-thirties in 1832. He developed a boil on his leg, and he operated on it himself. Septicaemia resulted and caused his death.

The Fee Simple and Valid Plough Lease Lot lands gave the owner greater rights on the land, including mineral rights and the right to sublet, which was not the case with ordinary plough settlements. Such leases were given at a minimum since the inception of British Administration in 1860. It was the Chiefs who continued to give settlements to the hillmen and they received a part of the rent. The Chiefs' traditional right of giving settlements was subsequently appropriated by the British government and the power was vested in their representative, the Assistant Commissioner, Superintendant or Deputy Commissioner. The Chiefs, and after the creation of the Mauza system the Headmen, continued to collect plough revenue on behalf of the Chiefs. In the 1930s the Chiefs were deprived of their rights and their role in the administration of plough revenue. A fixed annual compensation was provided to them.

Arable lands were given in settlement, after an initial rent-free period of three years. Even upto the end of the Pakistan period plough rent was only three rupees per acre per annum for first class paddy growing land. The second-class category was assessed to two rupees per acre and produced crops like sugarcane, tobacco and vegetables. Undulating or "bumpy" land was third class and the annual rent was one rupee per acre.

The hillsides and all other lands were common land and belonged to the people and were regulated by the headmen and held in trust by the Chiefs.These were for jumming and the British government did not give these lands in settlement to individuals. In the Pakistan period, in the mid 1950s hill lands began to be settled with indigenous hillmen in order to encourage them to grow fruits and trees and were called Grove land. They were assessed to an annual rent of one rupee per acre and because they were potential as well as actual jum lands the maximum share of the rent went to the Chiefs, followed by the Headmen, in the same proportion as in the case of jum rent. Even today jhum rent, earlier tax, is a fixed amount regardless of extent. A one-acre jum pays six rupees and a ten acre jum also pays six rupees.

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CHAPTER IV

Chakma Raja's Kingdom

The Commissioner of Chittagong, Halhead, in 1829 declared that the people of the Hill Tracts "were not subjects but merely tributaries. I do not recognize any right on our part to rule over them." In the earlier days the territory of the Chakma Raja (Chadigang) included Cox's Bazar and lands beyond the Naf River. Later the Naf that divides Bengal and Burma became the Chakma Raja's border in the south, commonly known as Dakkhinkul. In the north the Chakma Raja's territory extended up to the Feni River, and was called the Uttarkul. Hillpeople used to jum in the hills of Sitakunda. Some still live there, but I hear, under rather oppressive circumstances, as their number has since dwindled. There is a Buddhist temple here that is said to contain Buddha's footprint and the temple on the peak of Chandranath is one of the oldest temples in the region. During the Shiva Chaturdasi festival in February thousands of pilgrims climb the peak from where one can also glimpse the distant sea. In 1968 I climbed the peak and had a view of the panoramic plains and the sea.

Long before the capital of the Chakma Raja was shifted to Rangunea, which means an old jum or "ranya" in the Chakma language (and "Rangunnya," in Chittagonian dialect), it was located in Alikadam in the southern Hill Tracts, where old coins of the Chakma kings were found even in the late 1940s and early 1950s. There are still legends and place names to remind us of Kings Marekya and Toin Sileswari and of the Mad King, such as "Paglamura." Legend has it that the Chakma King Shatua used to practise yoga and would wash his heart and entrails from time to time. He is said to have developed certain psychic powers too. One day, his queen surprised him in his yogic ablutions and in hurriedly putting his heart and entrails back in position he made a miscalculation, and as a consequence lost his mental balance. Thenceforward he was known as the Pagla Raja (mad king).

From the Chakma Raja's Kingdom of Chadigang the English had gradually appropriated the western portions, and in the south the Bohmong had set himself up, with English encouragement, so as to act as a frontier guard against the depredations of marauders from Arakan. When the British annexed the Hill Tracts in 1860 there were two paramount chiefs, the Chakma Raja in the centre and north, and the Bohmong Raja in the south.

Whitehead, in *Thangliena* on page 132, says: "The following year (1848) there were Lakher and Lushai raids on encroaching Magh villages, and a year later an even larger Lushai raid on a Chakma village subject to the rani, launched in revenge for frauds perpetrated in barter deals between the two tribes. News of similar outrages between Magh and Chakma villages continued to come out of the hills until it was calculated in 1854 that during the past seventeen years there had been nineteen

raids, many of them attributable to Lakhers operating from across the Arakan border, in which 107 people had been killed and 186 carried off into slavery."

"Still no official action was taken except to supply arms to the Phru rajahs with authority to shoot to kill. The lieutenant-governor of Bengal, reviewing the situation in 1859, concluded that the solution lay in removing the hill country lying to the east of the cultivated plains of Chittagong from the operation of the General Regulations applicable elsewhere in India, which had never been intended to apply to untamed tribes living for the most part beyond the reach of the law. A 'Superintendent of Joom Tracts' would be appointed who would exercise general supervision over the chiefs. He would interfere as little as possible with their customary jurisdiction, except to ensure that the hillpeople living near the plains 'who are practically our subjects' – the clause reveals a certain confusion of thought – were defended from attack and themselves restrained from attacking others. In 1860 an act was passed giving effect to the lieutenant-governor's recommendations.

"Before the appointment of a hill superintendent had been made there occurred near the northern boundary of the hill tracts what came to be known as 'the great Kuki rebellion' when, in reaction against misgovernment by the Tippera rajah and his family (who were invariably at odds with one another), five hundred 'Kukis' – in fact, they were predominantly Lushais – living near the headwaters of the Feni swept down the river valley into the plains where they burnt or plundered fifteen villages, killed 185 British subjects and, carrying off a hundred captives, melted away again into the fastnesses of their hills. Among the raiders were Chakmas and Riangs subject to the Kalindi rani and Thangluahs belonging to a minor Lushai clan living just south of Demagri near the sources of the Feni and Karnafuli. Their chief Rothangpuia – in those days his name was spelt, and no doubt pronounced by the British, Rutton Poia – was later to play a leading role in Lewin's adventures."

In 1860, the British annexed the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and nominally recorded it as an adjunct to their earlier acquired possession of Chittagong. Subsequently, the Hill Tracts was separated from the Chittagong Administration and was declared an "Excluded Area", with its own revenue and civil administration. In their first " Rules for the Administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts," of 1882 and 1884, embodied in a little book called the Hill Tracts Manual, it says explicitly that "The three Chiefs are charged with the administration" of the Hill Tracts.

Before this, although the Hill Tracts nominally formed the "Kapas Mahal" in the Mughal records or Jum Banga, this inaccessible and remote territory was viewed through an aura of awe and mystery, full of tales of people who lived on trees, and of sorcerers and wizards. The hillpeople in the main believed in shamanistic as well as animistic practices. It is also a fact that some of the head hunting Lushai/Mizo tribes to the north and the east did not possess a surfeit of the finer points of culture, and none of tillage. In their occasional forays into the lower hills and valleys they did indulge in plunder and pillage, accompanied now and again with a chopping off of heads for good measure. The raids and headhunting was healthy fun and profit to the

marauding Lakhers, Haolongs and Syloos. And as mentioned earlier, the Chakmas and Marmas were not above indulging in occasional raids either.

The Hill Tracts continued to be administered under the Rules as promulgated under Regulation I of the CHT (the first Rules being modified to the Company's benefit as time and their control over the indigenous peoples and their rulers increased) under the traditional paramount Chiefs, assisted by Dewans, Talukdars, Khisas, Roazas, and Karbaris. By the beginning of the 20th century, the English introduced the mauza and headman system with a view to transforming the tribal to a territorial form of administration, and in "localizing the tribes around their Chiefs."

Succession in the Chakma Raj family follows the law of primogeniture, that is, the eldest son succeeding the father. The rule of succession in the Bohmong Raj family on the other hand is that of the eldest male member succeeding, usually a brother. As he had no sons, Dharam Bux was succeeded by the seniormost of his three Ranis, the renowned Kalindi Rani, daughter of Gujang Chakma of the Kurakutya Goza (sept), who had been given the title of Dewan subsequently by the Raja. Dharam Bux's second Rani was Atak Bibi, and his third Rani Hari Bibi, both cousins of Rani Kalindi. Dharam Bux, through Hari Bibi had a daughter, Rajkumari Chikan Bibi alias Menaka. She was married to Gopinath Dewan. Raja Harish Chandra was their son.

Rani Kalindi, the Queen Regnant, was renowned for her wisdom, statesmanship and generosity to all her subjects that belonged to different religions. The Chakmas then were evidently practitioners of the Mahayana form of Buddhism. Their religious literature comprising the various Taras, are still extant. In Mahayana cosmology Tara is the female counterpart of the Buddha and denotes wisdom. The Green Tara and the White Tara are still invoked among Tibetan, Nepalese, Bhutanese and Sikkimese Buddhists, and are the spiritual representatives of the Tibetan Emperor Sron Tsan Gampa's two Buddhist Queens. The first was Princess Bhrukuti daughter of King Amsuvarman of Nepal, and the second the Chinese Emperor's daughter Princess Wenching whom the King married in 641 AD. Both the Queens were followers of the Buddha and converted the King to Buddhism.

Rani Kalindi reformed the Buddhist church and established the famous Mahamuni temple. It was under her patronage and at her insistence that the first book on Buddhism in Bengali, the *Bauddharanjika* was published. The *Bauddharanjika* was a translation from the Burmese by Nilkomal Das and Phool Chandra Lothak. In 1856 Rani Kalindi invited a learned Theravada monk called Saramedha from Arakan and initiated much needed reforms within the Buddhist Church. Some of the Buddhist practices were becoming excessively animistic and tantric. All the Buddhists of Chittagong, under Rani Kalindi's leadership formed the Sangharaj Nikaya under Saramedha on whom the Rani conferred the title of Sangharaj at her Punyah Durbar in 1857. Two monks, Titamadhi and Dasyamadhi, however, proved recalcitrant and to this day these two factions form a small minority group among the Buddhists of Bengal as a whole. About eighty percent of the Buddhists in Bangladesh

(all are Theravadin) are to be found in the Hill Tracts. Rani Kalindi ruled not only the Chakma territory but the vast zemindary estates in Chittagong district as well, from her capital at Rajanagar, Rangunea.

"Nor were the British much better informed about the hillpeople," says Whitehead in *Thangliena*. He continues, "This was largely because, ever since the district of Chittagong had passed into British hands, they had been averse to tackling the problem they posed. Unwilling to assume direct administration of the hills, which would have involved heavy expenditure for little return, the chief of Chittagong – an official, it will be recalled, of the East India Company – had been content to keep the tribes at arm's length and to deal with them through the intermediary of the two paramount chiefs: the Chakma chief ... and the Magh chief, a member of the influential Phru family, who lived at Bandarban on the Sangu. Under this system, the two chiefs continued to exact tribute from the villages under their control, making the headmen (or raojas) responsible for its collection, a percentage of which they made over to the Chittagong treasury.

"Although the Chakmas and the Maghs were far and away the most numerous tribes in the tracts, their populations – perhaps 100,000 Chakmas and 50,000 Maghs – were very small in relation to the teeming millions in the plains, whose infuence on them was already beginning to be felt. Broadly speaking, for there was a great deal of overlapping, Magh villages dominated the northern and southern sector of the tracts, Chakma villages the central sector. Interspersed with them were those of much smaller tribes or sub-tribes, such as the Mrus, Mrungs (immigrants from Hill Tippera), Tsaks and Kumis in the south; the Pankos, Banjogis, Tancangyas, Khyangs (from the Chin Hills) and Riangs (also from Tippera) in the central sector; and Tipperas and a few Lushais in the north. Somewhere in the unvisited country to the north and north-east lay the principal Lushai villages and over the Arakan border to the south and south-east straddling the Kaladan river was the land of the Lakhers, both tribes much feared by the more peaceful tract-dwellers."

In regard to the British creation of the third paramount chief, in his book "An Account of the Chittagong Hill Tracts" R.H.S. Hutchinson (the District Officer) writes, "since our occupancy of the country, a third chief who is also a Magh, belonging to the Palaingsa clan, has been appointed....."

The first Superintendent of the Hill Tracts had been an eccentric and known locally as the "Pagla Sahib" (The mad Sahib). The second was Captain Graham whom Lewin succeeded. John Whitehead in *Thangliena*, refers to " the announcements that appeared in the Calcutta Gazette in March that T.H. Lewin, besides being promoted to a captaincy in the 104th Regiment of Bengal Fusiliers, had been appointed officiating Superintendent of the Tribes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts." Thomas Lewin "saw as his first and paramount task the need to crush and extinguish the influence of these chiefs." Lewin took up residence in Chadraghona, eighteen miles up the Karnafuli on the border of Chittagong district.

In the biography of Lewin, Whitehead writes of Lewin in 1867. "He had by now been confirmed in his appointment with the title Deputy Commissioner of the Hill Tracts of Chittagong, which gave him personal control over his huge territory. In Lieutenant Scott he had an assistant responsible under him for the country watered by the Sangu and Matamori Rivers, and the deputy magistrate at Cox's Bazar acted as his ex officio assistant for the area west and south of the Matamori. Under him also was an assistant superintendent of police commanding a force nearly four hundred strong, mostly hillmen." Whitehead says, "He was promoted from 4th to 3rd grade deputy commissioner, given a second European assistant, permitted to recruit Gurkhas for his frontier force, and sent nine more elephants to help with his various civil engineering works." In 1868 Lewin as Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts shifted the District Headquarters to Rangamati and built his bungalow after appropriating the site of Tabbar Khan's Rajbari that Buchanan had described in 1798.

" 'I am King in everything save in name,' he wrote to his mother, and to Jeannie that he was as nearly as possible absolute king over thousands, his influence over them increasing daily. One thing, he told her, was becoming daily more attractive to him power; it was almost growing into a passion, and he reveled in the almost unrestricted freedom of action he now possessed." Whitehead continues, "Of the three paramount chiefs, he had established friendly relations with only one, the Mong Rajah, whose name he spelt phonetically as Keo-ja-syne, living in the north at Maniksari."

"He still did not see eye to eye with the government on the official policy of paying what he called blackmail to the chiefs as an inducement to keep the peace; nor could he persuade them that the only way to put an end to Lushai raiding was to send a military expedition against them in order to convince them of the reality of British power." ..... "As a further step towards increasing his influence Lewin was granted permission to move his headquarters forty-nine miles further up the Karnafuli to Rangamati and to push forward the line of police posts nearer to 'Kookiedom'. For the threat posed by the untamed Lushais was never far from his mind."

The Rani, who observed *purdah*, refused to personally meet Lewin who was reputedly power drunk and arrogant, and professedly antagonistic to her. When he tried to force his way into the palace at Rajanagar he was forcibly barred from doing so. In reprisal Lewin sent fabricated reports against her to the government alleging that she had had attempts made on his life. His sustained campaign of calumny and hostility could not diminish by a jot the love and reverence the people had for her, not only the hillpeople but also the Hindus and Muslims of her zemindary where she constructed many temples and mosques and set up markets and excavated large ponds. Ranirhat, a market place eighteen miles from Rangamati on the road to Chittagong, is still flourishing.

Being rebuffed Lewin, in anger, picked up one of Kalindi Rani's Roazas (Headman) of some influence from among the northern *Palaingsa* sept of Marma and persuaded the government to make him a Raja – the Mong Raja – to rule over a new territory of 653 square miles taken from the Chakma. He was a close relative of the

Bohmong Raja and his name was Kyaw Jaw Sain, whose father was known as Kunjalal Dhamai. On page 129 of Lewin's biography, Whitehead confirms that there were only two paramount chiefs in the Hill Tracts and also describes the disposition of the main indigenous groups. The Chakma ruler being the most powerful in the Hill Tracts and Chittagong had to suffer diminution time and again, in pursuance of the English policy of divide and rule in its single-minded objective of acquiring power and pelf. Lewin tried to break up the Chakma territory further by suborning two important Taluk Dewans. However, they were steadfast in their loyalty to the Rani Kalindi and refused Lewin's offers.

Rani Kalindi created more Taluks under Dewans and Talukdars. She took another measure to preempt further aggrandizement of the rapacious English under Lewin, who had diminished her territory in the northwest by creating the Mong Circle. She sought to protect her southern borders from further depredations of Lewin by entering into a written treaty with the Bohmong Raja in 1869, defining her southern border and recognizing the Bohmong's dominions in the Hill Tracts as south of the Sangu River.

The Taluk Dewans have since been supplanted by the British innovated mauza headmen, who are more or less hereditary, but their jurisdiction is territorial and not based, as earlier, on parcels of humanity. For some time the Taluks, covering a number of mauzas, were retained as administrative and revenue units by the British but they were no longer confined to clans.

Another important event during Rani Kalindi's reign was the "Lushai Expedition", in which her grandson Raja Harish Chandra Roy played a prominent part. John Whitefield in *Thangliena* writes, "On 23 January one of the parties, having attacked and burnt a Cachari settlement at Ainerkhal in the Hailakandi subdivision, twenty five people being killed and thirty seven taken captive, hurried on to the Alexandrapur tea garden, which was also destroyed. Among the slaughtered was Dr. Winchester who was on a visit there and having his breakfast at the time, while his five-year-old daughter Mary was carried off. (The child's mother is nowhere mentioned in any of the accounts of the disaster or its aftermath.) A few hours later the adjoining tea garden Katticherra came under attack." The British now felt that the white man was also in danger. So in consequence of the Viceroy's order dated 11 July 1871, an Expeditionary Force was launched in November of that year. Captain Thomas Lewin was appointed political officer of the Chittagong column under Brigadier-General Brownlow. Simultaneously the other, the Cachar column, was launched.

Harish Chandra helped the Lushai Expedition to recover Mary Winchester in 1871-1872, on the instructions of his grandmother, the formidable Rani Kalindi. By helping the British the Chakmas thought they would get their own back on the Lushai marauders at whose hands they had been suffering for some time. Though he did not take up arms, nor did the Chakmas, the British appreciated his help and he was awarded a gold chain and watch, and the title of Rai Bahadur after the expedition. What transpired was that more than 500 of the Chakma volunteers had decided to withdraw their cooperation. The troops, along with their ration, arms and ammunition

were stranded. No boats were available and no one to transport either goods or men. The British Expeditionary Force was moribund, literally in a fix. Despite his self proclaimed and overrated boasts of wielding immeasurable influence in the Hill Tracts, Lewin had not succeeded with the Chakmas, the predominant and pre-eminent of the Jumma peoples, either through blandishments or with threats.

Government had no other option but to appeal to Kalindi Rani with whom Lewin had had a running feud. On the Rani's direction Harish Chandra intervened and persuaded the Chakmas not to desert the government, and thus saved the day. To Lewin's eyes Harish Chandra appeared to be a malleable character when compared to the redoubtable Rani Kalindi. Lewin even went so far as to urge Harish Chandra to become the Raja by deposing Rani Kalindi. Harish Chandra's respect and veneration for the old Rani, however, was too great to permit any such action. He promptly declined Lewin's offer. Despite Government's repeated urgings Harish Chandra refused to accede to the Chakma Raj as long as his revered grandmother the Rani Kalindi was alive. Even today, apart from the Chakmas, the Bengalis of Rangunea recall her name with pride and nostalgia.

When Mary Winchester was located, she was happy playing with other children and did not show any desire to come away with her rescuers. She had been looked after by one of the wives of a chief and was quite happy with the Lushais. She was sent off to England, where years later she became a teacher, married and had children of her own, but her heart was with the Lushais. According to Lushai accounts, when the expeditionary force found Mary Winchester she was about six, scantily clad and merrily smoking a bailum (cheroot). When asked to come to the British camp she flatly refused. Mary was forcibly brought back.

Her love for the Lushais was so great that after a few months she escaped in a cargo ship bound for India. When the ship touched Aden, however, she was apprehended and dispatched to Scotland again. On page 234 of *Thangliena* it says that Lewin, who did not see her, in his *Observer* article of 3 February refers to her as "a very pretty child about six years old with fair complexion, hazel eyes and pure European features". The Lushais had renamed her Zoluti. There is a writing table used in the Lushai Expedition now in the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow at Rangamati. Thomas Lewin was the first to carve his name on it. The table has acquired historic value, for every Deputy Commissioner since then has done the same.

The government was represented initially by a superintendent, then by a deputy commissioner, back and forth. But after the annexation of the Lushai Hills in 1872, the frontier of the Empire having been extended, they posted assistant commissioners, then a superintendent again. Still later they reverted to an increasingly more powerful Deputy Commissioner as the East India Company's, and subsequently the British Government's, stranglehold on the territory increased.

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CHAPTER V

British Stranglehold

Two letters, one by the Commissioner dated 19 August 1891 and another by the Chief Secretary dated 7 October 1898 reflect the British intention to do down the Rajas and Dewans in their bid to strengthen their hold and to increase revenue, especially plough rent, with little regard for equity or justice.

No. 1136 H.T/VI

From W.B. OLDHAM, Esq., C.I.E.,

Commissioner of the Chittagong Division,
To
THE CHIEF SECRETARY to the
GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

Dated Rangamati, the 19th August, 1891.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the report of the rules for the Chittagong Hill Tracts called for in the Revenue Department letter No. 2254-1146L.R. of 22nd December 1884, and in doing so to offer my own proposals on the subject. My references are the printed volumes of selections of the Chittagong Hill Tracts correspondence, the report on the administration of the Mong Raja's Circle for 1890-91 which I have just submitted. I have also taken into consideration the views of Government that were communicated by you demi-officially at the end of April last as to the necessity for still further de-regulationising the Hill Tracts, and administering them through the Chiefs and Headmen, now that the constitution of the District has been changed.

2. The most prominent references in the printed Volume are Lord Ulick Browne's letter of 1868 with which it begins describing the position at that time, and then Sir Richard Temple's minute of July 1876 at page 50. The subsequent correspondence gives the reasons first for not carrying out, and then for departing from Sir Richard Temple's orders, and the departures are embodied in the amended Rules of 1884 on which I now have to report .....

3. The Territorial Circle Rules. --- The peculiarity of these rules is that they enact the departures from Sir Richard Temple's orders of July 1876. While recognizing the Geographical Jurisdiction of the Chiefs, they provide also for their tribal jurisdiction being carried beyond the Geographical limits. Thus a Chakma who migrated into the Mong Circle, was still to pay his full capitation tax (Rs. 4/-) to the

Chakma Chief as before, as well as a new tax of Re.1/- to the Mong Chief. The Rules otherwise attempt to restrict and penalize migrations, the object being to consolidate and localize the tribe round its Chief. This object has been completely defeated and the rules in this respect have been practically inoperative. Briefly the Chakmas are too intelligent and civilized to be bound by such rules and the wild tribes like the Riangs too barbarous and too nomad. The Chiefs cannot enforce the payment of tribute from tribes-men who have passed far beyond their geographical jurisdictions, and it is obvious that in mountainous tracts of 6,000 square miles the Government officers cannot do so for them..... The Bohmong, in this connection, is only concerned with the boundary of the Chakma Circle south of which his Circle lies. Before 1872, he and Rani Kalindi had settled by written agreement what the geographical boundary between their respective Circle was, and there has been no following of the Bohmong's tribes-men into the Chakma Circle or vice versa.

6. *Formation of Mauzas.*--- The number of these plough settlements, their sudden increase (due not to these monstrous rules but to progress and the increase of population and its pressure from the plains) and their diffusion throughout the three Chiefs' Circles shew that the time for beginning a regular land settlement has come. We have the larger divisions, and we have the headmen agency. All that we want are the smaller local units, the mauzas.....

7. *Formation of Taluks.* --- There is, however, an intermediate stage before that of the formation of the mauzas is reached. For the purposes of the Census of 1891, the three Chiefs' Circles were divided into 31 blocks, i.e., the Bohmong's Circle into 17 blocks, Chakma Circle into 8 and the Mong Circle 6 blocks. These blocks have, for the most part, natural boundaries.....

8. *Administrattive Rules.* --- It will thus be seen that I advocate the cancellation of all the rules for territorial circles and for plough cultivation sanctioned by the Revenue Department letter No. 2254 – 1146 L. R., dated 22nd December 1884, to which I am now replying and that in their place I propose the appended series of principles and precepts under XVIII heads, in continuation of those issued in your predecessor's letter No. 3300, dated 20th June 1860 which are still in force and known to us as the Rules of 1860.....

9. *The Headmen.* --- As regards the Headmen whose common title is Roajah though there are several others, it will be observed that I propose to considerably increase their remuneration. But this is the first definite attempt I find in the papers to put the headmen on a fixed footing. They only began to be restored in 1870. Those whom I have seen are very superior in status to any village headmen in Bengal and seemed even higher than the Patel, Raddis or gandus of the Ceded District. They are, in fact, petty chiefs and we wish to make them Magistrates.....

10. *Jum-tax and Begar.*--- As regards the jum-tax and the begar I have been purposely indefinite and leave them to custom. The standard rate is Rs. 4 for a house in ordinary circumstances. But there are I find all sorts of exceptions. The Bohmong

gets Rs. 6, for his Mugh cultivators, the Rajparalia clan paid only Rs. 2/8 and so on.....

11. *Principles regarding the land.*--- ..... I do not here put forward any general views about subletting and the transferability of tenancies. It is now an axiom that when two such races live side by side as the Santals and Bengalis (or Bhojapuri who infest the Santal country) the Chakma and the Tippera, the hillmen of Chittagong and the plainsmen, there is no real equality or reciprocity in such transaction and the weaker race can only be safe-guarded by prohibiting them.

14. The Dewans.--- In Edgar's letter of September 1881 at page 80 of the printed volume, it was pointed out how little was known about the Dewans and their positions and the point has not been cleared in any of the subsequent correspondence. The Dewans are the aristocracy of the Chakma tribes deriving their position from their relationship with the Chief, maintaining it by their superior intelligence and personal qualities, as well as by their property which has been added to in many cases by their holding office under the Chief but with no rights as a class. Several of them occupy no official position and have never done so. It was chiefly to these men that Rani Kalindi made the unauthorized assessment of Capitation tax which she called taluks. These have always been pronounced to be illegal by our officers. Consequently though they are known to exist, their exact extent is not known and the question is further obscured by some of these Dewans having been employed as Tahsildars by the Chiefs and by their having retained the powers and duties as if the appointments had been perpetual. The tendency of the Dewans has always, since we have known them, been to imitate the Bengalis of the plains. They have frequently clamoured for permanent settlement and for the Talukdary System. They complain now because the late Chief's minor sons are being educated at Rangamati instead of at Calcutta or Chittagong. Most prominent among them and most typical of these characteristics are the Dewans Trilochan and Rajchandra, who have been so often mentioned in this report. The former was the manager of the Chakma Chief's Estates in Chittagong, which he so mismanaged that they were brought under the Court of Wards. Both men have rendered at times good services to Government for which they have been suitably rewarded. Trilochan has a rent-paying grant of 400 acres, which he has not yet opened. Rajchandra has a similar grant of 300 acres, 76 of which he has tilled. The services of such men cannot be disregarded in the new scheme, and I have provided for them by arranging that they may, in suitable cases, be placed in charge of the new taluks. Action on this proposal is only likely to be possible at first in the Mong and Chakma Circles. In the former these Chakma Dewans have as much influence as in their own territorial area. In the Bohmong Circle a sub-circle system, each sub-circle under one of the Chief's relatives was tried and failed. Nevertheless the taluk divisions are as much required there as elsewhere to enable the Mauzas, which must lie wholly within a taluk, to be formed. The necessity of providing for the Dewans elsewhere also arises from the fact that the Mauzawar system when fully established must destroy the so-called taluks of Capitation tax-payers which some of them still possess in an unauthorized and indeed

illicit sort of way. Though we have again and again declared their assignments to be illegal, active steps to break them up or destroy them have never been taken.

16. *The title of the officer in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.*--- This is at present Assistant Commissioner. I think it should be Superintendent as it used to be. There have been several Assistant Commissioners in the Hill Tracts and their subordinate positions are well known and remembered. Moreover the reversion to the more non-regulation policy of administration through the Chiefs makes the title Superintendent more appropriate. However he is styled, this officer must be more or less in independent charge and in fact, a district officer.

P. S. --- I see Forbes recommended that the two Government Khas Mahals should be restored to the Chakma Chief and the Bohmong, from whose circles they were formed. His reasons are that their formation is still felt as a grievance, that the Joom area has been lessened, and that the object for which they were constituted as refuges for oppressed tribes has been found to have no real foundation. Lyall has made a marginal note expressing concurrence, and saying that Sir Stuart Bayley gave what was tantamount to a promise that they should be restored. I see no strong objection. The forest reserves are the real Govt. Khas Mahals.....

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) W. B. OLDHAM,
Commissioner.

No. 543P.–D

FROM C.W. BOLTON, ESQ., C.S.I.,

Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal,

TO THE COMMISSIONER OF THE CHITTAGONG DIVISION.

Dated Darjeeling, the 7th October 1898.

POLITICAL,

SIR,

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of the letters noted in the margin (1) No. 24H., dated 29th January 1898. relating to the rules for the administration of the

(2) No. 121H., dated 31st March, 1898. Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the letter No. 24H., dated

(3) 133H., dated 7th April 1898 the 29th January 1898,your predecessor, Collier, represented that Rule X of the Plough Cultivation Rules sanctioned by the Government in 1892 was not sufficiently favourable for the development of such cultivation. He suggested that, in addition to the land newly brought under plough cultivation being rent-free for three years, its rent for the next ten years should not exceed annas 8 per acre, and that Rule I should be modified so as to admit of transfers of plough lands being made with the sanction of the Assistant Commissioner, as the prohibition of them discourages the sinking of capital for bringing lands under cultivation. With your letter No. 121H., dated the 31st March 1898, you forwarded, with your remarks and those of Cave-Browne, the Assistant Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a memorial from the Chiefs, Dewans and Raojus or headmen complaining that, under the rules of 1892,–

(a) the taluk and mauza division will break up the clanship which has been the basis of society and administration among the hillpeople;

(b) the prohibition of subletting, transfer, and partition of lands is proving highly injurious to plough cultivation;

(c) the appointment of dewans and headmen by the Assistant Commissioner, instead of by the Chiefs, seriously compromises the position of the latter in the eyes of their people; and

(d) the sanctioned rate of allowance to the Chiefs for plough cultivation is inadequate.

You are of opinion that the memorial deserves consideration, that the administrative "mauza" in particular is unsuited to the traditional system of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and that the taluk system is also undesirable on the same ground. You suggest that the future appointment of dewans might be left to the Chiefs, subject to approval by the Assistant Commissioner, and that any present

dewan might be removed for unfitness by the Commissioner, at the instance of the Assistant Commissioner, if the Chief first refused to remove him when required to do so by the Assistant Commissioner. You also recommend that the power of the Chiefs and of the cultivators to transfer, sublet, or partition lands should be left as unrestricted as possible, precaution being taken only against lands passing into the hands of money-lenders, and that the sale and subletting of agricultural holdings should be allowed, subject to the written consent of the Chiefs. In your second letter, No. 133H., dated the 7th April 1898, you state, in reply to an enquiry made by the Government, that it will be a sufficient safeguard if plough cultivation lands are made transferable with the written consent of the Chiefs, but that, if the Government does not agree to this proposal, the Assistant Commissioner might be empowered to accord sanction to transfers.

2. In reply, I am to say that in the rules scheduled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, which has been submitted to the Government of India for approval, the Commissioner of Chittagong has been authorized to permit subletting, partitions, and transfers of plough lands. The Lieutenant-Governor is of opinion that these powers should remain in the hands of the Commissioner, for the present at least, and that the Chiefs should not be vested with them. The suggestion that a minimum rate of rent of annas 8 should be fixed for the first ten years after the assessment of plough lands newly brought under cultivation does not commend itself to the Government. In paragraph 127 of the Administration Report of the Chittagong Division for the year 1892-93 it is stated that, while in some places Rs. 5 per acre for newly reclaimed land was gladly and fairly given, in other places 4 annas per acre was an unattainable minimum. There is thus a great difference in the quality and the value of the new lands, arising, no doubt, as regards the value, from proximity to, or distance from, the plains and markets; and it is not, therefore, advisable to fix a maximum or minimum rate of rent. Rule X of the Plough Cultivation Rules does not specify any special rate of rent for such lands, but gives discretion to the local officers to fix a rate. This discretion should be maintained. The rate should be settled after due consideration of the expense and trouble incurred by the lessees in clearing and preparing the land for cultivation, and should always be less than that paid for older lands of the same quality in the neighbourhood. The Commissioner should always closely examine the settlement reports, and see that an easy and equitable rate of rent has been fixed in all cases by the local officer.

3. As regards the memorial of the Chiefs, dewans, and headmen, I am to communicate the following remarks and orders of the Lieutenant-Governor: –

(*a*) *The formation of taluk and mauzas and the claim of the Chiefs to tribal jurisdiction.*– It appears that the Chakma Chief alone belongs to a clan. The other chiefs have no clan of their own, the first Mong Raja having been an Arracanese Mug whom it was convenient to the Government to place over the tribes in the north, as being the most important person in those parts, and the first Chief of the Bohmong's family having been a Burmese Boh who fled into the Tracts from the King of Ava. The Chakma Chief, moreover, once renounced the privilege of

exercising jurisdiction over the people of his clan beyond his Circle, when in 1869 Rani Kalindi executed a written agreement with the Bohmong Chief by which she gave up her claim on the Chakma tribesmen who passed south of the Sungoo river. Again, before the rules of 1892 were passed, not only were settlements independent of the Chiefs and scattered through the three Circles allowed, but two khas mahals, one abutting on the Chakma Circle and the other on the Bohmong's Circle, were constituted by the Government as places of refuge for the clansmen and others who were oppressed by the Chiefs or were dissatisfied with their administration. Clan jurisdiction has been condemned for the past 60 years by officers thoroughly acquainted with the Hill Tracts and the Government, and the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that the substitution of the system of strictly territorial jurisdiction is essential to the efficient administration and development of the Tracts. A modification of the rules now in force cannot, therefore, be approved. The formation of mauzas is also indispensable, both for the proper collection of the *jum* tax and the plough rent, and for other administrative purposes. The area of mauzas has been enlarged in the rules as scheduled in the draft Regulation, and this will, it is hoped, meet to a great extent the objection that there will be difficulty in finding new *jum* sites within the mauzas. In any case, the inhabitants of one mauza are not prohibited, under the rules, from *juming* in another mauza or in another Chief's Circle. The formation of mauzas undoubtedly tends to confine the people to permanent residence within fixed limits and also to abandon *jum* for plough cultivation, but these results are desirable in the interests of good administration and of the tribes themselves.

(*b*) *The appointment of Headmen and Taluk Dewans.*– It has been provided in Rule 39 of the draft Regulation that the Chiefs shall be consulted when headmen are appointed for mauzas where there are none existing. I am to say that this rule should in future be observed not only in appointing headmen to new mauzas, but also in filling up vacancies in all mauzas. It is desirable that the Chiefs should always be consulted when headmen are selected. I am to request you to report what progress has been made in the formation of mauzas and the appointment of headmen to them.

As regards the taluk dewans, I am to enquire whether it would not be possible to retain the taluk divisions for administrative convenience without appointing dewans to them in all cases. It appears from the Administration Reports that only a few dewans have been appointed since the passing of the rules of 1892. You are requested to report how many such appointments have been made, and what further appointments are proposed. I am to enquire how many of the 168 dewans mentioned in the present memorial have official duties and what those duties are, and, if any are employed as village headmen, what their number is, and whether more cannot be so employed. Captain Lewin stated that there were only 40 official dewans in the Chakma Circle.

The Lieutenant-Governor would also be glad to be furnished with a detailed account of the administrative powers of the Chiefs, Taluk Dewans, and headmen.

(*c*) *Inadequacy of the allowance of the Chiefs for plough cultivation.*– With regard to this complaint, I am to say that, as no personal trouble is imposed on the Chiefs, the rents being collected by the headmen, the Lieutenant-Governor does not consider the percentage of the collections allowed to them under the existing rules inadequate. The rules of 1884 allowed them a remission of Rs. 4 per annum for every raiyat settled to plough cultivation, but it was reported that the hillmen, after taking leases for plough cultivation, frequently sublet their holdings to Chittagong Muhammadans and resumed *juming*, continuing, however, to enjoy exemption from the *jum* tax. The Chiefs appear thus to have done little to develop plough cultivation by their hillpeople when they received the former high allowance. The present allowance will suffice to give them a substantial addition to their incomes, if they exert themselves to extend such cultivation wherever lands suitable for it are found in their circles.

4. I am to request that the purport of these orders may be communicated to the memorialists. Further orders will be passed later in regard to the taluk divisions and the appointment of dewans.

I have the honour to be,
SIR,
Your most obedient servant,
(Sd.) C. W. BOLTON,
Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

When the first Rules came into force in 1882, and then 1884, the Chiefs and Dewans enjoyed unrestricted power. With the second set of Rules promulgated in 1892 these were curtailed. Under Regulation 1, the Rules for the Administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, 1900, saw the introduction of the headman and the bypassing of the Taluk Dewans – and substantially diminishing the powers of the Chiefs. Yet the authority and the prestige of the hereditary chiefs continued unaffected and the bond of affection between them and their people continued unabated.

Upto 1930, Rule 52 was a salutary safeguard against exploitation by outsiders. It said, "Save as hereinafter provided, no person other than a Chakma, Mogh or a member of any hill tribe indigenous to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Lushai Hills, the Arakan Hill Tracts, or the State of Tripura shall enter or reside within the Chittagong Hill Tracts unless he is in possession of a permit granted by the Deputy Commissioner at his discretion." The Government of India Act of 1935 designated the Hill Tracts as a Wholly Excluded Area, and constitutionally this special status was also recognized in the Pakistan Constitution of 1956 and strengthened as a Tribal Area in the 1962 constitution, requiring Presidential assent for the promulgation of laws for the area.

Settlement of hillside lands called grove land was introduced by the Pakistan Government in the mid 1950s to encourage growing fruit trees on the hills as the

Kaptai dam would submerge 40% of plough lands, and jum lands were getting exhausted. The rent of grove land was shared in the same proportion as jum tax. The difference was that it had to be paid every year as land rent of one rupee per acre, whereas the jum tax was paid only if one actually burned a patch of ground. Furthermore, the tax, originally a capitation tax had nothing to do with either the size of the family or the area jummed. When a migrant jumma had a jum in one mauza and his house in another territorial unit, he paid full tax to the headman of the mauza of his residence because it was a house tax, and paid half the tax to the headman where his field was situated, where he was a Parkulya.

The Deputy Commissioner L.H. Niblett had backed me up on the Grove Land settlement scheme. Some of his predecessors were giving hillside settlements as third class lands, as in the case of the Chandraghona Paper Mills, which unfairly deprived the Chakma Raja of his hill lands as well as from the jum tax from those lands. While accompanying Prince Raza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran's brother, on a hunt in November 1956, Niblett had a fall from the elephant Lal Bahadur and died of his injuries. He had called on my mother and my wife and had seen my new born daughter Chandra Kalindi Desiree at Dr. Bottoms' house at Chandraghona only a couple of days before the fatal accident. He was one of the most popular Deputy Commissioners of the Hill Tracts.

CHAPTER VI

Raja Bhuvan Mohan

Rani Kalindi died on 22 September 1873, and Harish Chandra succeeded to the Raj in 1874. Although he was a hereditary Raja, he was "awarded" or "invested" with the title of Raja. This was done to make him feel obligated to the British, Whitehead writes in his biography of Lewin. This farce the British Indian government perpetuated on his son Bhuvan Mohan and grandson Nalinaksha. In my time the question of conferring the title did not arise because in Pakistan these titles are not conferred. Instead, the Government of Pakistan recognized my hereditary title officially. As it happened, I have been the only exclusively Pakistani Chakma Raja.

Raja Harish Chandra Roy Bahadur had two Ranis, the correct title for his wives, both sisters, daughters of Larma Goza Dewan Rattan Khan alias Chucyang Dewan, the third son of Gauri Charan of the Pirabhanga gosti (clan). By his first wife Shaurindri, Harish Chandra had two sons and three daughters. First son Kishori Mohan died in his childhood. His second son was Bhuvan Mohan. The three daughters were Rajkumaris Sarnamayee, Hiranmayee and Karunamayee, of whom two died young. By his second Rani, Manomahini, Harish Chandra had one son, Kumar Ramani Mohan. Kumar, short for Rajkumar, is the vernacular for Prince. At Harish Chandra's death in 1883 his successor Bhuvan Mohan being a seven year old minor the British Government appointed Kista Chandra Dewan as Regent of the Chakma territory, and Trilochan Dewan to manage the vast Chittagong estates. The Dowager Ranis of Harish Chandra lived austerely and brought up their children frugally. They were lonesome with three children and the cooking pot was small. They cherished a fond hope that some day these children would raise large families so that they could cook meals for many from large pots.

The minor Raja as a ward of government had to be educated, so the British Government established the first high school at Rangamati, though some of the leading Dewans were critical and felt the young princes should have been educated in good, well established schools in Chittagong and Calcutta. The next one, a private high school (Shah School) in Rangamati, would be set up eighty years later. Bhuvan Mohan and his younger half brother Ramani Mohan were enrolled, and to encourage education among the hillpeople, not only was schooling made free, even free clothes and soap were provided to the boarders. Both the brothers subsequently went in for college education and Bhuvan Mohan passed his First Arts creditably.

Raja Bhuvan Mohan Roy was born on 4 May 1876. At the age of 19, he married Rani Dayamayee, the second daughter of Chandra Kanta Dewan of the Kurakutya sept (same as Rani Kalindi) at Rajanagar, Rangunea on 1 March 1885. The Deputy Commissioner's wife personally helped in the selection of the Rani. With pomp and ceremony Bhuvan Mohan was formally installed as the Chakma Raja three days after attaining the age of 21, at the Rangamati Rajbari on 7 May 1887.

Rani Dayamayee bore Bhuvan Mohan three children – aunt Bijanbala (Bara Pishi) born in 1899, she would proudly say, of the Victorian era, my father Nalinaksha born in 1902, and Birupaksha whom my sister and I called Kakku, born in 1905. On 20 April 1905, Rani Dayamayee died of pernicious anaemia leaving Kakku a three-month old baby. Both father and Kakku were breast fed by foster mothers, as was the custom then, when mother's milk was not available due to poor health. Cow's milk was then not used until a Deputy Commissioner's wife suggested it as a substitute and Kakku benefited from the advice.

While out deer hunting near the Furomon Hills to the west of Rangamati, Bhuvan Mohan once stayed at the house of his uncle-in-law. There he met again his late wife's younger cousin Ramamayee, daughter of Ganga Manik Dewan, first cousin of Chandrakanta Dewan. She had now grown up and he fell in love with her and she with him. There was an added advantage: Ramamayee was an only child and was therefore likely to continue the non-prolific trend. This consideration also weighed on his mind when he married her at Rangamati Rajbari on 23 November 1907.

Bhuvan Mohan's step-mother-cum-aunt Manomohini was still alive and she looked after his motherless children with as much care and devotion as she had bestowed on Bhuvan Mohan and her own son Ramani Mohan. Father told me that this remarkable old Rani, whom they called "Shauda", used to indulge them more than she did the children of her own son Ramani Mohan. Having fathered three children Bhuvan Mohan thought his duty done toward fulfilling his mother's and step-mother's dreams for large cooking pots. In due course his brother Ramani Mohan married and raised a family of four sons and a daughter, with all of whom we were very close as we were with the grandchildren of Bhuvan Mohan's sister and of course those through his second Rani, Ramamayee.

Bhuvan Mohan started the construction of a new Rajbari in 1902, the year my father was born on 6 June. The night before, his uncle Kumar Ramani Mohan had shot a panther hardly a quarter of a mile from the Rajbari. The building was completed in 1914. It was a tall, double storied brick house, more than twice the size of the Rajanagar Rajbari, the old two storied brick house built by Raja Tabbar Khan. Jabbar Khan, Dharam Bux and Rani Kalindi lived there, and their descendants, Harish Chandra, upto Bhuvan Mohan and Ramani Mohan for some time as well. It was no small feat to build the Rajbari at Rangamati as there was no road, only a track to Chittagong and though bricks were made in kilns on site some of the building material had to be transported upriver from Chittagong in country boats, and the huge wooden Gamar beams had to be floated down from forests above the Barkal area. Some distance away he also built a temple, whose walls were nearly twenty feet thick, so as to take the weight of a structure modelled on the Bodhgaya Temple that was about 175 feet tall. Bhuvan Mohan hoped that his descendants would continue to build toward that height. In this temple he installed a large bronze Buddha statue, the face of which contained the auspicious eight metals (Asta-Dhatu), especially cast in

Mandalay, Burma. He also initiated the annual religious festival Gotamuni Mela to take place on the day following the Punyah.

The jeepable road, originally 48 and subsequently 46 miles from Chittagong, would come into existence only in the 1950s. Bhuvan Mohan also acquired the Oldham Institute in Anderkilla that stood on his land in Chittagong town and renovated it. He named this, his town house, Rajapur. In Raja Harish Chandra's time the government had taken on rent Dharam Bux Khan's palace on the next hill for the Divisional Commissioner. It was called Lal Kothi and was built by the Tangchangyas as a gift to their King. The house was tall so that an elephant with the "howdah" could climb on to the veranda.

Raja Bhuvan was revered as the fountainhead of justice, and was known as a good administrator and a just and generous man. He was a patriarch who ruled not only the Chakmas, but his own household as well. His family stood in awe of him and most of the children kept their distance. He was particularly fond, in his unostentatious way, of his eldest son and heir – my father, Nalinaksha – but had him brought up strictly and with simplicity. He was strict with all his children but was indulgent toward his sister's eldest son Pulin Behari Dewan.

Bhuvan Mohan's personal habits were simple, verging on the austere. He never used scented hair oil, only mustard oil. He never parted his hair, only combed it forward. He had few clothes. Usually be wore a coarse knee length dhoti, for to wear it at ankle length he considered foppish. He wore close-collared shirts. Ostentation and extravagance were foreign to his nature. He rose early every morning, and worked in his study. Sometimes he inspected the agricultural works in progress. The agricultural workers were generally from the plains under a Bengali Supervisor, Sardar Jarib Ali who served for many years in grandfather and father's time, as well as in my time, before the dam, when he retired. After an early lunch – smaller children ate separately, but the grown ups ate together – he took a short nap. He would then put on his high close-collared jacket and trousers and turban and go to the kutchery (court building) where he tried cases.

The dowager Rani Ramamayee told me that Bhuvan Mohan's great – grandfather, Maharaja Dharam Bux, used to have two beautiful Manipuri girls on either side of the palace door when he was leaving for the kutchery. He would fondle one or the other on the way to court, perhaps to compensate for the arduous judicial task ahead. Bhuvan Mohan, however, in deference to the mores of the time, indulged in his amorous pursuits in private.

Bhuvan Mohan may have been a just ruler and a stern father, but he was no less a romantic for that, and had considerable personal charm. He neither played cards, nor smoked, nor drank spirituous liquor. He did not spend on luxuries for himself though he was generous with others. He had two hobbies – hunting, and occasional extramarital forays. I remember three of his rifles. Two were elephant guns – the 500 express and the 465. The latter, despite its rubber–cushioned butt had

tremendous recoil and sometimes when out on tours my cousins and I used it to get some target practice. The third was the Winchester repeater rifle, which had no recoil at all and took in fifteen bullets. After my first airgun days I enjoyed banging away with it at demitasse sized small earthen pots, which we would throw into the inner pond behind the back garden. Bhuvan Mohan's mother, Rani Shaurindri had this pond excavated, and the larger outer pond was the gift of Harish Chandra's mother, Rajkumari Chikan Bibi (Menaka). With the help of George Stone I purchased a hunting rifle with scope in 1959 and a small neat little revolver.

Chakma Rajas are traditionally accessible to their people and Bhuvan Mohan was no exception. Though he was a man of considerable dignity, he was never haughty and becausè they loved him, they came with their problems or just to pay their respects. Those who were poor and had nothing to bring were as welcome as those that did, and none returned without a meal or some mark of hospitality. The relationship was that of father and son, rather than ruler and subject. Although the Raja could issue distress warrants and attach people's properties for non-payment of revenues and taxes, this was rarely done. On their part, people were simple and did not deliberately default in their payment of dues. Judically he had the power of imposing sentences of unlimited imprisonment, whipping and fine as well as the powers of detention and restitution.

There were 556 princely states. The largest was Hyderabad and Berar, 82,700 sq miles with a population of 14.5 million and a revenue income of 8.50 crore rupees which exceeded the combined revenues of 20 states of the United Nations. The smallest was Vejanoness reigned over by a Thakur in Kathiawar. He had 184 subjects and the extent of the state was 22 acres, and the revènue was Rs. 450 per annum. Five states, Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Mysore, Gwalior and Baroda were the first division saluate states. There were 118 states with gun salutes ranging from 21 to 9 guns. Thirteen gun salute rulers and above were regarded as Maharajas, and 11 and 9 gun rulers known as Rajas. The second division states were 117 in number who enjoyed limited jurisdiction within their boundaries. "The last tier of the Prince's League" according to Mohammad Ali Shafiq (Dawn 23 June 2002), "consisted of 327 Talukdars, Jagirdars, Thanedars and Thakurs. Their rules were essentially non-jurisdictional and such powers were exercised on their behalf by political agents of the government of India. Rajput tribes reigning in 66 states followed by Pathan Muslims, fording over 20 principalities." One Viceroy, Lord Wavell, composed a pithy epigram to remember the inter se precedence of the five premier states: Hot (Hyderabad) Kippers (Kashmir) Make (Mysore) Good (Gwalior) Breakfast (Baroda).

In 1773 the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay were placed under Bengal whose head was changed from that of Governor to Governer General. In his coronation Durbar in 1911 the new King George V made two important announcements. One was the decision to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi, and the second was the annulment of Curzon's partitioning of Bengal.

There were a limited number of seats at the Delhi Durbar of 1911 and the British Indian Government had to be selective and at the same time had to contend with the sensitivities and susceptibilities of the Indian aristocracy ranging from the biggest Maharajas to influential Jagirdars (land owners) and learned scholars with titles like Mahamahopadhyay. Some Rajas and Nawabs were so hard up that to attend would have meant great financial hardship. Some of these were formally invited so as not to cause offence and at the same time were "excused" from attending the Durbar. There had been some talk of recognizing the three Hill Tracts Chiefs as rulers of native states but nothing eventually came of it. However, the three Chiefs were important enough to have been invited to the Delhi Durbar in 1911 and all three attended. Although the three Chiefs of the Chittagong Hill Tracts were not included in the category of rulers of native states they exercized revenue and judicial powers and wielded authority and influence far beyond many. They also happened to be hereditary Narapatis (Lords of men) who were always considered more powerful and prestigious than mere Bhupatis (Lords of land).

While returning from Delhi two members of Raja Bhuvan's entourage found themselves in a compartment with a few others and lots of baggage and bundles scattered all over as was typical in Indian railway trains then. One of them was Bekya Karbari, a leader of one of the eight Khas Mauzas that the Chakma Raja then had. (Two separate reports, by British Administrators F.D. Ascoli and J.P. Mills, who visited the Hill Tracts only for a few weeks and had no experience of the workings of the Administration or of the indigenous society, were accepted and implemented by the British Indian Government. Many of the so called reforms flowing from these reports merely aimed at increasing the revenue earnings of government at the cost of the chiefs, and at increasing the powers of the Deputy Commissioner. They were not really concerned with the wishes or the welfare of the local population and certainly not with that of the chiefs. The Khas Mauzas, where the Chief is also the headman, had been reduced from 16 to 8 and then further to 2. I had one added in the Kassalong Rehabilitation area, to total 3. The Mauza of residence Rangapani, replaced Rangamati which went under water, and the highlands of Bandukbhanga Mauza remained, though the Chengi valley plough lands of the Mauza went under the dam waters.) The Grandson of Bekya Karbari, in my time was a popular headman of Mitingachari Mauza.

The other occupant was Thokchand. The former, Bekya Karbari was thin and small whereas the latter, the captain of Bhuvan Mohan's bodyguards was stocky and strong. He was sleeping in an upper berth and woke up suddenly to find that a man much bigger than the Karbari was beating him up. The manner was strange because each time he would strike once with his elbow and follow it up with a punch. The small chap, however, defended himself and repeatedly shouted defiantly, "Strike me if you dare". The others watched the *tamasha*. Thokchand gave Bekya's adversary one mighty kick. He staggered back and fell down, then realizing that his victim was not alone and this one looked like a tough Gurkha he retreated to a corner. On return, Bekya Karbari would be teased with, "Strike me if you dare".

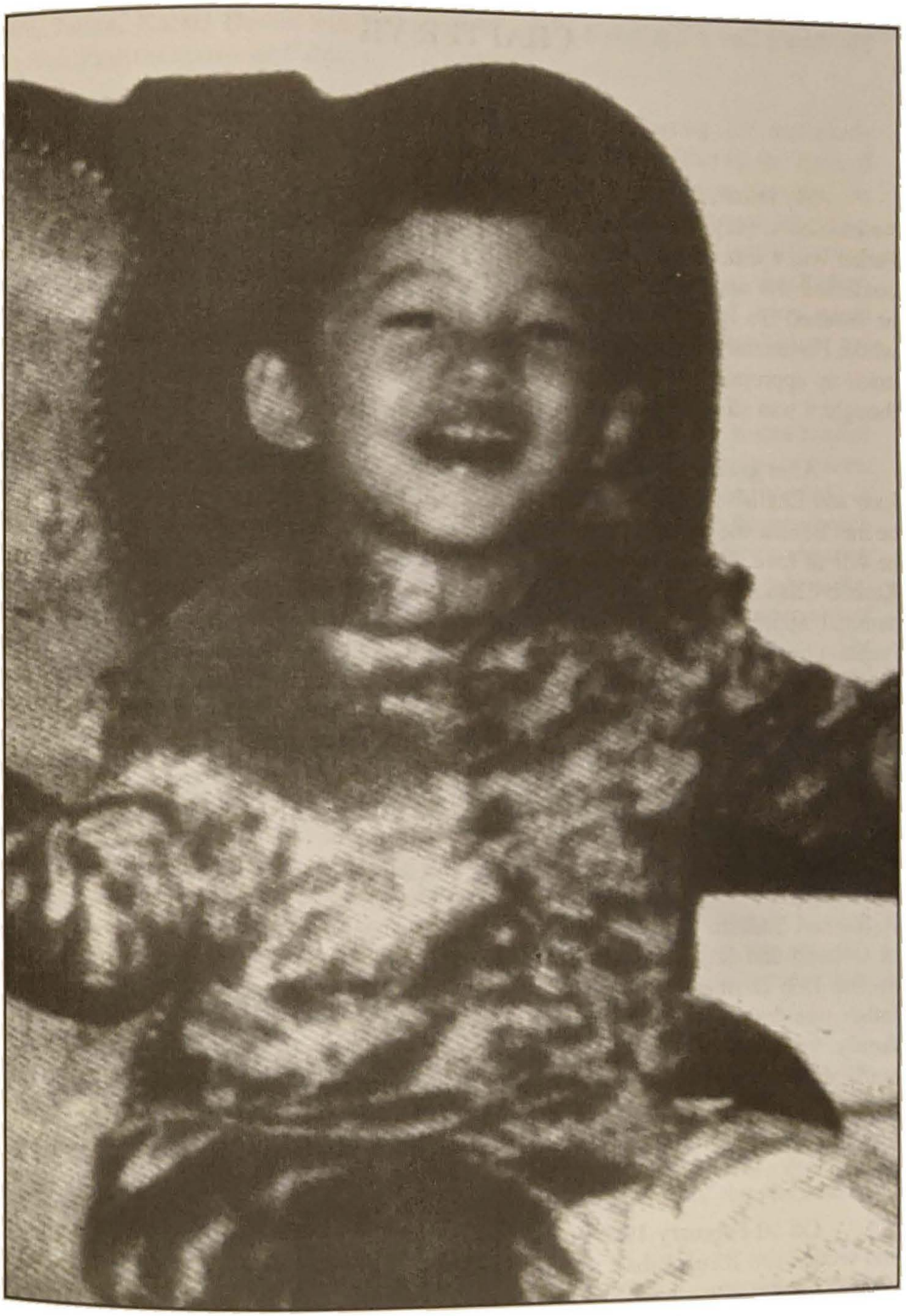
On their way back, in Calcutta, Raja Bhuvan went to see a movie with some members of his entourage including a younger cousin-in-law, Kali Kinkar Dewan. While the film was on he noticed Kali Kinkar leaning forward in his seat and from time to time surreptitiously sniffing at the occupant's head on the seat in front of him. He whispered, "What are you upto?" Somewhat abashed Kali Kinkar replied that he was trying to confirm whether it was true that a *mem's* (Englishwoman) hair smelt of chicken droppings. He was satisfied that this was not true and that in fact the Englishwoman sitting in front of him exuded a vaguely pleasant scent. Raja Bhuvan was not sure whether to laugh or to berate the young man, so he just told him to stop and desist forthwith.

Raja Bhuvan Mohan Roy (Grandfather of Raja Tridiv Roy):Born 4 May 1876
Accession (Installation as Chakma Raja) 7 May 1897 - Died 17 September 1934.

Raja Nalinaksha Roy (Father of Raja Tridiv Roy): Born 6 June 1902 Accession (Installation as Chakma Raja) 7 March 1935 - Died 7 October 1951.

Raja Tridiv Roy: Born: 14 May 1933
Accession (Installed as Chakma Raja) 2 March 1953

Raja Devasish Roy (Son of Raja Tridiv Roy): Born: 9 April 1959
Accession (Installed as Chakma Raja) 25 November 1977



Raj Kumar Tribhuvan Aryadev Roy (Crown Prince, Grandson of Raja Tridiv Roy): Born: 11 February 1990 (Installed as Crown Prince; Yuvaraj) 16 February 2003

CHAPTER VII

Raja Nalinaksha

My father, born on 6 June 1902, was a quiet, retiring man, who would paint watercolours, play tennis and badminton and occasionally go for shoots and hunts. Father was a man of few words and of a calm and serene temperament. However, he confessed that once when he took part in a dramatic play he got so excited that when he finished his lines he found he could not stop. So he carried on adlibbing for a while. Fortunately, his interlocutor was an experienced hand and not a ham actor. He made up appropriate responses and the dialogue continued for a while. The audience thought it was all in the script and sat back and enjoyed it.

After graduating from the prestigious Presidency College at Calcutta, he read Law and English for his Master's degree at the Calcutta University. It was then that he met Benita, the college-going daughter of Barrister Saral Chandra Sen, with whom he fell in love. Saral Sen's father was the renowned religious reformer of Bengal, Keshab Chandra Sen. They were related to a number of ruling houses of India. After parental approval from both sides it was decided that they would get married. Preparations for the wedding got under way involving also a tax of one rupee per family amongst all the Chakmas, and others in the Chakma territory called circle. By tradition at the chief's or his children's wedding a tax is levied. Despite the wedding tax grandfather incurred a substantial debt for the joint wedding extravaganza.

Father's younger brother, Kumar Birupaksha, born in 1905, who was also at Presidency College in Calcutta, received orders from his father: "No more education, choose a bride." Since the Prince of Wales was getting married the Duke of York had better do likewise. He tried to prevaricate but orders were orders. His choice fell on Rajkumari Sudhira Narayan, daughter of Dr. Bhabendra Narayan, the Civil Surgeon of Comilla and Rajkumari Tilottama, sister of the renowned music director Kumar Sachin Deb Barman. As the names Narayan and Deb Barman indicate, Sudhira's father was from the Cooch Behar Raj family and her mother from the Tripura Raj family. Sudhira was also a college student in Calcutta and had no intention of getting married. However, both families having approved of the match, Birupaksha and Sudhira briefly got a glimpse of each other from a distance in the Botanical Gardens of Calcutta, arranged through mutual family friends, and thereafter found themselves hustled into marriage.

On 10 February 1926 grandfather celebrated his heir apparent Nalinaksha's and second son Birupaksha's marriage with pomp and pageantry. Special trains were provided to bring the bridal parties from Calcutta and Comilla to Chittagong. In the bustle and commotion someone discovered that the younger groom was not on the train and pulled the alarm chain somewhere between Comilla and Chittagong. The train crunched to a halt and a search was instituted. Finally they discovered uncle

Birupaksha in some far-removed compartment, helping warm the milk for his little niece, Jamini Kumar Dewan and Rajkumari Bijanbala's two and a half month old daughter Pratima known as Baby.

From our hilltop house Rajapur in Anderkilla, Chittagong, the motorcade took the party to the river jetty called Rai Bahadur Abhay Mitra Ghat on the bank of the Karnafuli, which met the sea twelve miles downstream. The party boarded the fleet of motor launches that chugged away up the river towards Rangamati, sixty-four miles away. At Rangamati, a timber and bamboo bridge spanned the Karnafuli so that people could come to the *mela* (fair) and the wedding festivities at the Rajbari without crossing in slow country boats. The river was bridged once again twentyseven years later, in March 1953, on the occasion of my installation and marriage.

The procession and festivities are still spoken of by elders in voices hushed with remembered magnificence – of fairy tale splendour and gargantuan proportions. The brides had to cross seven strands of thread that stretched across the threshold of the Rajbari and Rani Ramamayee received them, by holding the little finger of each bride in turn. Bands blared and flower petals were strewn, and through cheering crowds the Raja's sepoys with their red and golden yellow turbans (the Chakma Raj colour being red and yellow) and martini action shotguns led the procession of brocaded palanquins and caparisoned elephants from the river to the palace. The wedding festivities continued for a week. There were circuses and magic shows and at night free open-air dramas, called jatras. The most famous jatra party in Bengal then – the Genesh Opera was brought in from Calcutta. Fifteen years earlier, at the marriage of the 12-year old princess Rajkumari Bijanbala, Raja Bhuvan had also brought the best jatra party from Calutta then, called Mathuranath Opera. All shows were of course free for all who came, as were all meals for the Dewans, headmen and guests. After the twin weddings, grandfather, ever considerate, gave up his own suite of rooms in the eastern wing upstairs to his eldest son and his bride, and shifted himself and his Rani with the smaller children to the western wing downstairs. He installed Birupaksha and Sudhira in the western wing upstairs. His eldest daughter Bijanbala and her husband Jamini Kumar Dewan with their little daughter Baby continued to occupy the central part of the house upstairs.

Raja Bhuvan having died at Rangamati, Rajbari on 17 September 1934, his 32-year old eldest son Raja Nalinaksha Roy succeeded him, being formally installed on 7 March 1935. He extended agriculture, consolidated the landed estates in Chittagong district and encouraged education among the hillpeople. He provided wise leadership to his people especially during the turbulent days of the partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

Babydidi's brothers Priyadarsan, Chinmoy and Kushal grew up closely together with Didi and me. Their younger sister Chandrima was closer in age to Moitri and Rakhi. The other cousins were Rajib and Parthib, younger brothers of Chiranjib, all of whom grew up along with us in the old Rajbari and later in

Sreeketan. The children of father's half brothers and sisters and first cousins were also close to us from childhood as were the descendants of Rajkumari Chikan Bibi and Gopinath who form our closest clan of the Wangza Sept (Goza). We were also close with their female line descendants, as well as our first cousins of the Mulima and other septs. According to Chakma Custom *Gusti* is another close kinship group wherein restrictions apply regarding inter-marriage, exogamy being practiced upto five generations. We Chakmas also observe abstemious practices at the death of common ancestors or descendants.

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CHAPTER VIII

Some Family Exploits

Life in the Hill Tracts is quaint, and that of the Chakma Raj family members traditionally colourful, sybaritic, often quixotic, seldom dull. The first graduate from the Hill Tracts was induced to marry my father's older sister Raj Kumari Bijanbala. There is a saying in Chakma about marrying a princess. It says, a blind wife is preferable to no wife, but a princess only if even that is not available. So Jamini Kumar Dewan was persuaded to marry my aunt, and given no time to look for blind women. It was not deemed suitable for the princess to leave the palace and go and live in an ordinary house, though the groom was an aristocrat, an only child with no mother, hence no mother-in-law problems for the princess. The groom was made to come and live in his father-in-law's house. Rajkumari Bijanbala was then about twelve years old.

Sometime in 1948 the graduate left wife and family to find his fortune. He was an astrologer and well versed in numerology. His stellar calculations led him to the turf at Calcutta. He died there in his seventies, winning many races, losing more, nevertheless in reasonable happiness. My aunt Bijanbala, a pleasant, unbitter stoic, did make attempts to get her husband back. Finally, she reconciled herself to a single life and busied herself with her grandchildren. She died on 2 December 1973 at the age of 74. The question of her glancing at other men did not arise. Princesses are made of sterner stuff. Princes, on the other hand, were considered freaks if they displayed monoerotic tendencies and stuck to merely one woman.

Rani Ramamayee, though herself an only child, gave birth to nine children. Of the daughters, two survived: one the mother of seven children; the other childless. The senior of these two daughters, called Sushamabala, (their names were all copied by the professional fishermen for their own children, to the annoyance of the princesses) was married and sent away to a leading Dewan. He subsequently became very powerful and was greatly feared for his habit of locking people up if he felt like it. As a Headman of two prosperous mauzas (all headmen are magistrates) he sometimes tended to exercise his judicial powers injudiciously (unlike most headmen). He was nicknamed John Gilpin by one of his brothers-in-law because apart from other eccentricities, when he rode a horse he would flap his arms as though they were wings. The allusion was beyond us but perhaps Gilpin was a sort of parallel case to the man from La Mancha. The Raja's sons-in-law are generally known for their pronounced foibles.

The second daughter, aunt Niharbala, was married to the prince of Manikcheri. As a colourful Prince Hal, he was a delightful eccentric but not necessarily harmless. Once, one of his mother's heavy gold necklaces found its way around a dancing girl's neck in Chittagong. She acquired it legitimately. It was a

token of Kumar Momphru Sain's bounty. His natural generosity increased with the amount of whisky he imbibed. Naturally, when he ran out of his allowance, he borrowed. When no creditors were available he helped himself to the royal coffers, as Prince Humayun had once done during the Emperor Babar's absence from Delhi.

He was once banished to the island of Kutubdia, on the Bay of Bengal. Ostensibly, it was to learn the art of governance but actually because he was making his mother's life miserable, and once too often looting the Mong Raj treasury including sums to be paid by the Lady Chief to the Government. The Chief, to whom a tax is paid annually by every jumming family in his territory, collects and retains the major share. A portion goes to the mauza headman and an even smaller percentage to government. The British had transformed the earlier capitation or poll tax to the jum tax.

At dead of night once some fishermen brought a man and a woman to Kumar Momphru Sain, charging them with adultery. The budding judge lowered his whisky glass sombrely and sat up. "What's the problem?"

"We caught these two in *flagrante delicto*. She is the wife of so and so, who is out at sea, fishing."

"I see. When did all this take place?"
"Only an hour ago."
"What were you all doing there?"

No one volunteered an answer. "You must either have had theft in mind or some of you have an eye on the woman yourselves." He glared at them. "Either you are guilty of trespass because obviously you were not invited in, or one of the two must have opened the door to you. In that case you could not have seen them both in a compromising situation." He finally pronounced, "Clear out before I sentence you." And that was that. Solomon could not have dispensed justice more sound, nor more prompt. Like Napoleon he was short. And like Bony he escaped from the island. A brother-in-law had come to visit him. "I'm seeing him off," he told the government officer. The latter was, in form, the prince's keeper but in fact unabashedly afraid of him. Momphru got onto the paddle steamer and steamed off. "Godforsaken place. Who's going to stay here?" he said in reply when his astonished brother-in-law realized that Prince Hal had no intention of getting off the departing steamer. From Chittagong, two paddle steamers called Mallard and Nila used to make bi-weekly visits to Cox's Bazar, Nila and some of the other off shore islands.

Kumar Momphru Sain was born on 10 November 1910 at the Mong Rajbari in Manikcheri. His mother was the lady Mong Chief Nanoomah who was installed in 1929 and died in 1954, and his father Nephru Sain of the Bohmong Raj family. He married Rajkumari Niharbala, daughter of Raja Bhuvan Mohan Roy, the Chakma Chief in 1932, and was installed as the Mong Raja in 1954. He died in 1984. Paihla Prue Chowdhury son of Kyaswe-u Chowdhury was recognized earlier and formally

installed as the Mong Raja on 27 October 1998. He is the direct descendant of Kalachan, brother of Mong Raja Niprue Sain. His wife's name is Madhabi Lata Chowdhury. Although his mother Rajkumari Nanooma succeeded her father, Mong Raja Momphru's adopted daughter or her son was not recognized by the Bangladesh Government as his successor. This is a departure from the practice in the British period when in many native states adopted children of the rulers were recognized as the ruler's successor. Rajkumari Unika, the adopted daughter of Mong Raja Momphru Sain and Mong Rani Niharbala was not recognized as the Chief for amongst other grounds because she was not related by blood to the Chief. However, there are a number of precedents in the native states of British India when adopted heirs with no sanguinary ties were permitted to succeed their adoptive fathers, the rulers. The renowned poloplayer and friend of British royalty, "Jai", father of the present Maharaja Bhabani Singh of Jaipur is a case in point.

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Love manifests itself in multifarious ways, even amongst the Chakmas. In our family, a conglomerate of three or four generations living together or in close proximity in our early childhood, love's manifestations had their bizarre aspects too. Kumar Kubalayaksha, my grandfather's third son by his second Rani – married quite late, impossibly late by Chakma standards: that is to say, in his early thirties. When in his twenties Kubalay had decided that he would marry, if he ever did, one of two cousins of my mother's whom he had seen in his college days in Calcutta. In the meantime, he had a sustained relationship with one of the (to us children) ugliest maidservants. When pressed for marriage he would say he was getting the maximum pleasure at minimum cost so why should he get married at all? Eventually, however, he did marry Ramala Sen, one of the two girls he had set his eye on.

I still remember a particular incident when I was about six or seven years old. One of my myriad cousins, better known by his initials, K.B., is a colourful personality and a great prankster. (All this of course happened in old Rangamati in our ancient home, for we moved to the new place only in 1960). One evening around dusk K.B. dressed himself like a servant girl and went into our back garden. He began picking flowers. Another relative, who was in on the secret, quietly told uncle Kubalay that one of the prettier maidservants was in the garden. Kubalay waited until it got darker and then went into the garden. After a few minutes we heard spicy invective and saw a figure running for life, with Kubalay in hot pursuit (with one slipper on, the other he had thrown at K.B.). The latter told us later that Kubalay had approached him and made overtures, while he, pretending to be the maidservant protested and remonstrated gently. When Kubalay's ardour grew pronounced K.B. could not help himself and laughed out loud. Kubalay, discovering he had been taken for a ride, tried to catch hold of him and rough him up, but having failed threw a slipper and chased the vanishing K.B. At that time he had not taken up with the ugly one, a factor in extenuation for his stud bull reactions.

When after vacations he returned to Ripon College in Calcutta Kubalay took with him a reluctant old Tripura servant called Kripacharan. This fellow was blind in one eye and had an attractive, much younger wife. He was, and perhaps not altogether without reason, lacking in confidence in his wife, whom he was leaving behind at Rangamati. One afternoon, some days later, mother received a telegram. It read, "Kripacharan expired." It was signed "Kubalay." The address, however, said "Rajbari" and then "Hill Chittagong" and not Chittagong Hill Tracts or even simply Hill Tracts. Some believed in the authenticity of the telegram and some did not, maintaining that if Kubalay had sent it, it would have been addressed to father and not mother, and it would not have had a mistake in the address. Mother, however, believed in the veracity of the news and took a bet with one of her cousins-in-law.

Kripacharan's wife, in tears, refused to eat, and donned the garb of a widow – a white sari. She was of the *Palaingsa* Marma people, but had taken to the sari earlier in life. Two days later, Kripacharan turned up from Calcutta, naturally unannounced, and at dead of night knocked at the door of his hut. The desolate wife asked who it was, and as there was no reply, she tried to go back to sleep. Again the knocking started. She was certain it was her husband's ghost. In mounting trepidation she opened the door. In tumbled Kripacharan with a sheepish grin. He told her he was testing whether she loved him. Mother was very annoyed at his return as she did not like having to lose her wager. She told him squarely that he had no business to be alive when he was supposed to be dead.

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Old Rajbari - Rangamati, Chittagong Hill Tracts (before inundation)

CHAPTER IX

Rajbari - Rajanagar

My first visit to the desolate old Rajbari at Rajanagar, Rangunea, that I can remember was with my father when I was a young boy, perhaps in 1940. Some hours after leaving Rangamati, we disembarked from the motor launch at Ichamati mukh near Kaukhali, a few miles short of Chittagong, the only seaport of East Bengal. Our elephants Tamalini and Ranjit were there on the riverside and many of the local gentry waited to welcome us. Then in a long procession with young school children shouting slogans of welcome and waving paper flags, bunting and streamers we set off, some on elephant back, some on foot, for the old capital Rajanagar less than three miles inland. There was nobody living in the old palace, a white double storeyed brick house that was in disrepair even then. A few relatives had their houses in the compound, and one of them, Mohini Mohan Dewan, was our traditional host.

Hindu and Barua Buddhist women greeted us with the sound of "Ulu," traditional ululation, as we passed their villages. If father happened to be on foot they would surge forward from their sheltered bamboo and mud houses and touch his feet. If he had gone past, or he was on an elephant, some came on to the road and picked up the dust and sprinkled it on their heads. This was ancient custom that thought that Raj darshan (a sight of the Raja) was an act of merit. Custom dies hard. They happened on my visits. When my son, Raja Devasish, barrister-at-law, born in 1959 and installed as the Chakma Raja (with my blessings, as I was living in Pakistan) in 1977, visited Rangunea even in the 1980s and 1990s this greeting with ululation and the touching of feet and dust continued. Even the Muslims claimed that it was "soab" to see the Raja. So they too joined their Buddhist and Hindu co-villagers, not in the ululation or the feet touching, but to pay their respects in appropriate Islamic form.

There were subordinate landlords and rent paying tenants as well as agricultural lands and properties in and around Rangunea. These "zemindary" estates formed a part of the Chittagong or "Regulation" District (as opposed to the Hill Tracts, non-regulated Excluded Area). At these visits rents were collected, and three of the markets that we owned, known as Ranirhat (the largest), Rajanagar Rajarhat and the Padua Rajarhat, were annually auctioned for the right to collect a tax called "hasil." The two keenest contenders were Gurabasa and Wali. There were a lot of callers and we visited different places and schools and institutions besides the Mahamuni temple established by Rani Kalindi. The head monk was known as the Rangunea Rajguru and was a learned and wise senior monk. Our family have a traditionally special affection for the people of Chittagong, particularly Rangunea, and I found, they for us. It is like an old clan tie. These visits lasted about three days usually.

The palanquin bearers that came to Rangamati on special occasions, called "Haris", worked in relays. They came from the Rajanagar estate in Chittagong, the immediate earlier capital of the Chakma Rajas. These palki bearers belonged to a special class of lower caste Hindus. Rani Kalindi had given them rent-free land for providing periodic labour. Even in my time these people continued to render their traditional services and every year they came to Rangamati for the Punyah festival, as did the families that raised betel leaves in Rajanagar and the cobblers there. They brought a prescribed amount of betel leaves and the cobblers brought specially designed red gondola shaped slippers for the Rani. They were duty bound to make a certain number of pairs for the Rani as it was so stipulated by Rani Kalindi more than a hundred and fifty years ago. The Raja, however, got a pair of black sturdy Scandinavian style clogs by courtesy.

Apart from these annual gifts to her successors Rani Kalindi also left an ivory chair and a pair of ivory sandals that are still treasured as heirlooms. And among items that belonged to her husband, Maharaja Dharam Bux, there is a "Pasha" diceboard of cloth, and ivory dice pieces. This was the ancient game that Shakuni the prince of Gandhara was an expert at. And it was the game that was "doctored" against Prince Yudhisthir of the Pandavas in favour of the Kaurava Prince Duryodhan, in the epic "Mahabharat."

There was also Dharam Bux's gold amulet. The wearer was supposed to be invincible in battle, and father jokingly asked a Tripura servant called Lalit if he would wear it so father could shoot him to see if he got hurt. Lalit was clever and said the wearer had to be a King or it would not be effective, and they both laughed heartily. I was quite young then but I remember the exchange. Another item was a brass pitcher Dharam Bux used like a mug, to douse water over himself. He was said to have been of powerful physique and I can imagine so because the jar, even empty, was heavy. There was also a huge iron "Kharga", a curved implement used for decapitating sacrificial animals, especially to the fierce four handed black goddess Kali, with protruding tongue. In one hand she holds a Kharga. It is believed that Dharam Bux was inclined toward tantric practices. In ancient times humans also used to be sacrificed, especially by Kali worshipping Kapaliks. In a marble plaque briefly outlining some facts of Maharaja Dharam Bux's life, there is mention that he awarded the title of "Maharaj Bhattacharjee" to a certain Brahmin priest of Chittagong. Barada Kumar Bhattacharjee, a direct descendant of the former, took up service as a junior officer of the Chakma Raj during grandfather's time. His family home with substantial lands and a dighi (pond) was in Patiya near Dohazari, between Chittagong and Cox's bazar. Barada Babu also served during my time to a ripe old age and was a great asset because of his wisdom, experience and loyalty.

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CHAPTER X

Punyah

All the three rulers in the Tracts, the Chakma, the Bohmong and the Mong, in English official parlance termed Chiefs, held their tax-collecting durbar called the *Punyah*, once every year. *Punyah* in Sanskrit is the conjuction of two words, "auspicious" and "day". The largest and most spectacular festival was the one of the Chakma Raja's at Rangamati. The day selected had to be when the December moon was waxing or on the full moon day itself, depending on the degree and duration of auspicious time according to the almanac, and those well versed in the language of the stars.

For the occasion, all the headmen in the Chakma territory, covering half the Hill Tracts, assembled at their Raja's house and the Rajbari premises, a day or so earlier. The headman is the administrative, revenue and judicial head of a territorial unit called *mauza*, varying from five to thirty odd square miles in area. They, along with their entourage, were put up at guesthouses and temporary camps and provided with rations during the festival. Dewans and relatives from the interior also came and it was indeed an annual get-together of the clan as well.

Shopkeepers from the bazar across the Karnafuli river as well as bigger merchants from Chittagong city rented small plots where they built bamboo stalls on both sides of the road from the riverside to the cannon outside the main gate and then along the temple road. They displayed wares ranging from bangles and necklaces to suitcases and tin trunks to sweaters, shoes and popular shawls called *shajkabar* that had to be red, blue or green. There were circuses, magic shows, puppet dances, merry-go-rounds and restaurants. A favourite stall was the hoopla, with a table more like a steep sloping school desk covered with red cloth on which coins of various denominations were laid out. One had to try and ring the coins with small metal bangles, a dozen for a rupee. The Chakmas, like most hillmen, are inveterate gamblers, and at the funfairs they loved playing Blackjack or the popular "Crown and Anchor."

The girls were dressed in the homewoven ankle length dark blue *pinan*, a flower motif blouse, and over it the red *khadi*, with blue, green and yellow stripes, while a few wore the sari. The pinan is a thick, coarse wrap-around and not a sarong or longyi that one gets into like a pillowcase with both ends open. They invariably wrap the bright *shahaj* shawl, and these dabs of colour in the throngs of jostling, laughing, merry makers made one feel it was good to be alive. They wore their heavy silver jewellery, and their anklets clanged musically as they strolled hand in hand with their men, who bought, laughed, smoked and drank, now and again giving a whoop of joy called "reng". This was a pleasant change from the sombre plains where you seldom heard clear open laughter. In the hills nobody stares at a girl nor

undresses her with their eyes. It is not that the hillmen do not appreciate beauty, it is merely that they respect the individual dignity of a woman.

Early in the morning loud crackers heralded the dawn of the much awaited Punyah. Two bands, one from Chittagong and another from Rajanagar, Rangunea, the old capital, alternately played in the courtyard in front of the Rajbari. The Hindu Bengali fishermen, the doms, who belong to the "Namashudra" group of the Hindu hierarchy of castes, played their indigenous band consisting chiefly of drums and only one trumpet like instrument called the shehnai, which some describe as a double reeded oboe. Around noon the increasing crowd converged on the open paved portion of the nachkhana, jostling for a better position to view the durbar hall, a pillared pavilion where the dais was decorated in scarlet and gold brocade. From the court house entrance a red carpet led to the dais where stood the throne for the Raja, and for the heir apparent to his right, and a table in front with a blue and gold cloth with a large silver vase with white roses. Two large divans were placed facing each other at right angles to the main dais. The one for the Raj family was covered with maroon velvet and the other for the monks was covered with velvet of golden yellow.

Not only the Chakmas but many other hillpeople from within the Chakma territory and beyond flocked to the festival. The Pankhua men with their waist long hair tied in a bun at the back of the head had a portion next to the forehead shaved. They wore black and red striped cloths like a toga draped across one shoulder. The Bawm who also kept long hair, however, did not shave a part of the top of their head and tied their hair in a side-knot. They also wore togas, feathers in their headbands and iron bangles and earrings, and looked more colourful than their women. The Mro men likewise wore their hair long and in a top knot. Their women, who in their habitat wore normally a nine-inch wide skirt and nothing above the waist, draped themselves for the occasion. As an added decoration both the Mro men and women blackened their teeth. And the Tanchangya men, a people similar to the Chakma but whose wives were usually older, wore flowers behind their ears. Some of the girls smoked long pipes and were jolly and giggled a lot. They wore homespun longsleeved blouses and the blue pinan that was similar to the Chakma's or sometimes a red one. The boys and girls moved together in pairs, or groups, and some enjoyed dancing in the closed corridors of the temple.

Guests were fed in batches, on long straw mats facing each other in the back veranda downstairs. Banana leaves were placed with the lighter side up, unlike everywhere else outside the Hill Tracts, in South India, Sri Lanka, Central America and the Caribbean included. The two leaves would be placed on low slit bamboo tables called mejang. Rows of servers with large brass bowls and buckets ladled rice and curried meat to the guests. Large silver plates were used for select occasions for Dewans and headmen but not during the hurly burly of the Punyah.

Crackers were let off periodically. The bands played a medley of film songs and highland music interspersed with the "Drunken Sailor" and other sea shanties. Before one in the afternoon the headmen and karbaris and special guests took their

seats in the durbar hall at the nachkhana. The Buddhist monks came in single file and sat crosslegged on their dais, silent and serene, each with a palm leaf fan held in front of his face.

Atop the lofty Rajbari, a two storeyed whitewashed solid brick house, the red Chakma Raj standard stood out against the deep blue December sky. The crest has two rampant elephants with a mounted cannon between them, and a pair of crossed swords. The motto in Sanskrit, when translated reads "Fortune smiles upon the lion hearted and the diligent." In the Pakistan era the flag flew below the Pakistan flag though during the British period the Union Jack was not flown.

From the ground the elevated plinth of the house was linked by a series of broad steps. On the highest step the sentry marched from one end to the other. The entrance to the Rajbari was guarded by two stone lions, one with his eyes open and the other with closed eyes. Below the stone lions two small chained cannons were pinioned to stone slabs. On the ground stood a pair of red water pitchers with sprays of mango leaves and on the top rested a saucer with a slow burning wick in oil. The ceremonial guards stood at parade attention between the elephants, which with their eyes and foreheads decorated with lime and vermilion, stood patiently facing the Rajbari. The sentry did not bar the entry of visitors and hillpeople from all regions entered and roamed around the house. They explored and touched any object that aroused their curiosity. They proudly said "Our Raja's house is our house." They went upstairs, and many of the girls were fascinated by the big, full length mirrors, and giggled as they preened themselves and patted their long hair invariably tied in a bun at the nape of the neck. They admired the huge elephant tusks and trophies and paintings. When we were young, we often found eager faces around the old H.M.V. gramophone, some wanting to see the man or woman singing inside. If they were told that the singers were not actually there, some believed and some did not.

Father was dressed in a gold brocade close necked, knee length coat called achkan, golden turban with emerald and diamond *sarpech* with aigrette tuft, a matching emerald and diamond necklace, a long gold necklace resembling a bicycle chain called the "muff" chain, and a thin fine necklace with Pali mantras written in gold. With one hand on his ceremonial ivory handled sword in a maroon velvet scabbard father entered the drawing room upstairs. Only slightly less regally attired, his sons, daughters nephews and cousins including girls below the age of twelve followed him. Downstairs we touched the feet of our elders and the photographs of departed ancestors to our foreheads in homage. Two liveried attendants in their anklelength red velvet coats waited on the top stair outside with the open golden umbrella for father, and the black and gold one for me when I was older. My durbar dress was a gold and blue achkan, a golden turban with gold embroidered flowers, Grandfather's gold and diamond *sarpech* sometimes called Kalgi with soft white plume, and his sword.

We lined up on the top stair. Father went down one step. The elephants raised their trunks in salute. The captain of the guards raised his sword and the

sepoys presented arms. Father held up his right hand in greeting. All the bands played furiously and discordantly. The procession began with the Chakma Raj soldiers in khaki and red and yellow fatigue caps that had replaced the turbans of grandfather's era, and martini action guns, leading the slow march. Father's ADC, in red flannel jacket with big brass buttons, black trousers and a black and silver turban, marched three paces ahead and to the left of father. My position was to father's right, one pace behind, and behind both of us marched our umbrella bearers. After us came the rest of the Raj family, followed by the leading dewans and headmen. When we entered the durbar hall, the assembly rose, and more crackers were fired. Father proceeded to the dais slowly and sat on the throne, with me to his right.

The Punyah ceremony commenced with the saffron robed Buddhist monks chanting mantras for about three minutes. After them the Brahmin priest, clad in a white dhoti, ascended the dais with offerings of small flower garlands that father and I accepted with a nod and laid on the table in front of us. The Brahmin priest put a sandalwood paste mark on our foreheads, and did the same with the members of the Raj family and special invitees. Next, the Finance Officer came and offered attar of rose. We touched the ornate jar with a fingertip, smeared it behind our hand and took a sniff, all done with elaborate deliberation. The headmen then came to the foot of the dais, one after another, climbed one step, made an obeisance and held out their swords. Father stepped forward to the edge of the dais and touched each sword.

The rest of the family reposed against brocaded cushions, all in achkans and turbans of varying colours, and the pre-pubescent girls in Benares silks saris and the red and blue pinan khadi with diadem or tiara. As a child I sat with the others on the family dais – with a big scarlet coverlet and gold bolster against which we leaned. At these Punyah durbars of almost three hours' duration, we were instructed to sit as still as possible – but of course we fidgeted a great deal. We enjoyed the diversion of the dozing Brahmin across the aisle who put sandalwood paste on our foreheads. He lived in the Kali temple of the Hindus at the peninsular end of the Rangamati Bazar across the river from us. He would doze, then suddenly wake up with a start. He would glance around sheepishly, embarrassment written large and clear on his face. Sometimes he would smile or frown at us, then open his eyes wide, but soon he would be dozing again. As a small boy I once asked father how he sat up straight and without moving, silent and solemn for such a long time. "When you sit on the dais with me a little later you will do the same," he said in reply. I protested and said I could never manage to sit so solemnly and still. "Don't worry, you will," he said. And I did, later. But when I was small I had persisted in knowing how he did it. He smiled and said simply, "Tradition."

Barada Babu, the Finance Officer, then initiated the collection of nazrana (tribute) money from the headmen. This was a token of fealty. A headman offered donations for the religious festival called *Gotamuni Mela* and the all night theatrical performances that followed. Barada Babu announced in a loud voice "No. 1, Dhamaichara: 5,5,3." The other officers wrote down the figures. It meant the headman of mauza No. 1 Dhamaichara had paid five rupees as nazrana, five rupees

for the religious festival Gotamuni Mela and three rupees toward defraying the expenditure for the jatra performances. These jatra parties were hired from the plains districts from Chittagong or Brahmanbaria, and the expenses incurred for them were borne by the Raja, though the traditional offering by the headmen covered a part of the expenses. After the headmen came the Khisas and Karbaris and others in offering nazrana. The English headmaster of the Government High School, John Miller, used to kneel down and bow to father in paying homage during the annual ceremonies, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as long as he was in Rangamati. Most people watched him amused, but he would insist on demonstrating his respect to tradition.

In the olden days the Khisas who ranked after the Dewans and Talukdars were the Raja's agents in the villages and were entitled to the "bung" of the animal slain in a hunt, as the Raja was entitled to the haunch and the first fruits. The "bung" is a fleshy upper part of the carcass. A Khisa is also 50% exempt from Jum rent and pays only three rupees.

The actual jum tax collection, the raison detre of the Punyah, then commenced. The name and number of the mauza was announced loudly and the headman paid the revenue collected–minus his share. A family that jummed, paid six rupees per annum. Of this the chief's share was two and a half rupees, the headman's two rupees and a quarter and the government's was one rupee and a quarter. The headman's share originally was one and a quarter rupee. The British government added a rupee as commutation of Begar. Traditionally the Rajas and the headmen had the right of free labour for a certain number of days a year from every adult male resident in their jurisdiction. This was later abolished and while labour could be requisitioned it had to be paid for.

After about two hours or more, when the taxes were in, the Finance Officer Barada Babu announced the amount, and handed over a sheet of paper to father, with a grin if the amount collected was good, or a scowl if he felt it was below expectations. Father glanced at the sheet, and passed it on to me. Sometimes he would say, "Seems like this year's harvest is not bad." Father's aide-de-camp then came to the dais, opened a silver casket and presented father the speech on rolled sheets of fullscap paper. Father stood up and addressed the assembly. He ended his speech with a prayer for their peace and happiness, and the gathering applauded. Barada Babu then appeared with a silver syringe and a bowl of rose water and started squirting it on father and me, and then on the rest. After the first row or two of leaders, he would squirt in various directions, sometime catching some unsuspecting man, who would start violently, to the amusement of many. The bands started playing again and in a procession we returned to the Rajbari.

The following day would be the temple ceremony of the *Gotamuni Mela*. In the evening, accompanied by guards and music from the bands the ladies would be carried in brocaded palanquins, and enter the temple between screened curtains held up on either side. The men would walk, dressed in dhoti, round necked Kurta in Bengal called Punjabi, and shawls. In the temple we would light candles, hear

mantras and sermons from monks led by Ven. Ananda Mitra Sthabir from Petanyamachara and after his death Ven. Rajguru Aggravansa Mahathero, who was in Rangoon for many years before I appointed him as the Chakma Rajguru. The last sermon would be from the Ven. Rajguru Dharmaratna Mahathera, Vinayvisarad Tattavaridhi. He was the headmonk of the Rangunea Mahamuni Temple, established by Rani Kalindi. He was not only serene, and often smiling, but an eloquent speaker and well versed in the doctrine and canons of the Dhamma. He had taken the yellow robes at the age of seven, and became a monk at the permitted age of 20. He studied the Abhidhamma and the Vinaya for many years in Sri Lanka. He was a plains Buddhist, a Barua. They came from Arakan and are believed to be the descendants of the ancient Licchavis or Vajjis, who were referred to by the Buddha as a people who had a democratic dispensation and who could not be vanquished as long as they remained united and were true to their social and ethical codes.

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In full form: Raja Tridiv Roy at the annual Durbar (Punyah ceremony), circa 1962

CHAPTER XI

Festivals and Traditions

Apart from the Punyah the most enjoyed festival of the Chakmas is the *Bizu* Festival in the middle of April. The first day is *Phul* (flower) *Bizu*, when early in the morning children pick flowers and help decorate their houses. Young people earn merit by carrying water for the elders to bathe in, and all go to the temple and offer flowers. On the second day, *Mul* (Main) Bizu, no meat is eaten. Everyone wears new clothes, visits each other, eats a vegetable dish called *pachan* and drinks and makes merry. On the third day, the bacchic *Gajya–Pajya* (Rolling and Lolling) they continue social calls and gorge themselves with fish, flesh and wine, especially *jagara*, a rice beer.

Fullmoon days are observed more meticulously by the Marma people, who are generally more punctilious in the performance of Buddhist religious rites and ceremonies than the Chakma. Baishaki Purnima or Vesak (full moon day of May) is, however, the most sacred day to all Buddhists, for it commemorates three sacred events, the birth, attainment of Buddhahood and Parinirvana (passing away of the Buddha). The Chakmas feed Buddhist monks, light candles in their temples and listen to mantras and sermons.

Every hillgirl weaves her own skirt and breastcloth and other items like the "gilap" (bedspread) in the handloom called *ben*. A Chakma girl is not considered eligible for marriage unless she is able to weave a pattern cloth called *Alam*, wherein she innovates her own designs. In the *ben* the leather Tapsicham that harnesses one to the loom and the porcupine quill called Kuduk-Kadak are as essential as the thread itself. Yarn is readily available but in our grandfather's day one would pick the jum cotton and go through the whole process of manufacturing the yarn at home. In their jums or at work in the forests the Chakma usually wore a short coarse wraparound and a homespun open fronted coat, a headdress and a knife (tagal) at his waist. With increasing contact with the outside world they adopted the dhoti and later on the ubiquitous shirts and trousers.

The marriage ceremony has two essential components, the *jurget* (twin knot) or jadan, and the *chumalang*. Early in the morning, young girls bring water in pitchers from the stream or river. At the entrance to the groom's house two large, pot bellied earthen "Kums" of water are placed, one on either side with a wick in a pool of oil burning on its cover. Seven strands of thread connect the jars, beside each of which a plantain tree is dug in. The bride, in new pinan, khadi and shawl, the traditional dress of the Chakma woman, arrives in procession at the groom's house, often accompanied by a band of drummers. As they approach crackers are fired. The mother-in-law extends a hand over the thread, takes hold of the bride's little finger and welcomes her across the threshold. The bride has to step across the seven strands

of thread without snapping any. At the preordained auspicious moment the bride is led into the marriage chamber and made to sit at the side of the groom. No member of *Garba* relationship, that is, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces are permitted in this room. An unmarried boy and a girl take up position – the girl beside the groom and the boy beside the bride. These two must either not be related to each other or if related must not be of a prohibited degree relationship because they too may become man and wife some day, either in this life or in some future incarnation.

The ojha, seeking permission, three times asks aloud if he may tie the nuptial knot, and if anyone amongst the assembled raises any objection the marriage ceremony is stopped. On receiving loud and clear approval three times, the knot is tied. A full boiled egg mixed with rice, signifying fertility and harmony, is brought in. The bride and groom feed each other with it. It is not necessary to eat the concoction unless one is very hungry, to touch it with one's lips suffices. Usually the bride and groom are expected to be bashful and their hands are made to go through the motions by the bestman and the bride'smaid. The bride and groom then feed *paan* (betel leaf) to each other. At a given signal the couple rises. Whoever stands up first wears the pants in the family, it is believed. The pair is then led out of the room to touch the feet of their elders who bless them by putting bits of dhoob grass, unhusked rice paddy and cotton wool on their heads.

The next morning the ojha performs the *chumalang* puja and the bride and groom pay homage and bow to the severed boar's head. This sacrifice is an offering to the deity that presides over household and home and dispenses felicity and prosperity. If a man is too poor to afford a pig the boar is substituted by three chickens. For three days the bride and groom sleep apart. After that they go to the bride's house, where the marriage is consummated. If the bride's home is too far away the ceremony called *beasutbhanga* is commemorated with refreshments under a green tree, after which the couple return home and live together as man and wife.

The dead are cremated, with two exceptions, unteethed infants and those who die of contagious disease – both of which categories are buried. Cremation takes place on the banks of a river or stream, and on all days except Wednesdays. The body is bathed, dressed and laid out on a bamboo bier, which is covered with new cloth and decorated with flowers. A drum with an eerie beat is played at intervals and relatives and villagers assemble to pay their last respects, and to help. On the funeral pyre – a man is laid on five layers of wood and a woman on seven – a man's head is placed to the east and a woman's to the west. The reason according to the Chakma is that the man can see the setting sun so he may know when it is time to leave his jum and return home. In the case of the woman, she should be able to see the sun rise so that she can light the hearth fire and start cooking for her man. This indicates the Chakma's love of leisure and his propensity to make the woman do most of the work – a trait distinctly pronounced in hillpeople.

Tradition has it that a Chakma King once married a Muslim princess who made a condition that when she died her head must be placed to the west, towards

Mecca. Ever since, in her honour, all women's heads are placed to the west. Chakma women are cremated though presumably the Muslim Queen was buried. Mourning is observed for a week, during which time patrilineal relatives up to seven generations abstain from eating fish, flesh and eggs, a practice not found among the other hillmen. The count starts from the day the bones and ashes are immersed in a stream, a day after the cremation. Also Chakma males shave their heads at the death of their parents.

Sometimes at the *sradh* or seventh day ceremony for the dead, the ritual of *Bhat-deya* is performed. All the relatives, upto seven generations of the *gusti* in the male line congregate and Raolis begin invoking the spirits of the departed. Systematically and in chronological order a roll call begins of the dead. The Sadengri Tara and other Taras are recited by the Raolis, who all the while prepare 108 special rice cakes for the ceremony on the following day.

Early the following morning fowls and pigs are sacrificed. The Raolis place the rice cakes and portions of sacrificial meat in the centre of the hall. The whole family and gusti assemble and more Taras are read. Occasionally it happens that a member of the congregation falls unconscious. The Raolis recite the names of all the departed relatives again. At the mention of the corresponding name the person recovers from the trance, supposedly revealing the identity of the reborn ancestor. There have been instances, I have been told, when animals fall down and die (presumably to be reborn in a better plane of existence), and little children enter into a trance and ask for items that belonged to them in a previous birth.

Bighnabinashan Khisha and Birchandra Chakma, two Chakma Forest Officers who had been posted to Kurseong at the time, came to see me in hospital when I had broken my arm at school in 1947. The younger brother of the former, Ambassador Mukur Kanti Khisha, who had joined his brother, one of the few Chakma officers who had opted for India, told me he had been a witness to a Bhat-deya ceremony in his early youth, at his village in Khabangpujya, Upper Chengi Valley. At the mention of a dead relative of the host's, a hog suddenly groaned and grunted and became unconscious. On making enquiries if anyone knew if the departed soul had left an unpaid debt or an unfulfilled promise, one of those present recollected that the deceased had borrowed a small sum of money from him long ago but then he had forgotten all about it, as surely as the borrower must have had as well. It was a paltry amount. The host insisted on repaying the debt there and then. The moment this was done, the pig shuddered and died, presumably being released from the obligations of an unpaid debt.

For a week beginning from the night following the cremation the family spread wheat flour on a platter, as well as place a glass of water and an egg in the room where the person has died. It is believed that the departed spirit sometimes partakes of the food and water and also leaves telltale signs on the platter of flour indicating the sphere of its rebirth. Generally it is believed that a departed soul, if it is of a very high spiritual calibre, is immediately reborn in one of the heavens in the

world of form, or in the formless world. Most, however, due to unfulfilled desires and attachments enter the spirit world and hover around their near and dear ones for a week, after which, if a sradh is performed, they are freed of the cravings of the immediate past and are reborn according to their karma, in the world of man and beast or in one of the heavens or in one of the hot or cold hells.

In the same upstairs bedroom in the east, and in the same beds where Didi and I slept with our parents, father, when he was a young boy had slept with his father at the eastern end, his step-mother at the western end (his mother had died when he was three) and in between a growing array of his halfbrothers and sisters. Father related to me an eerie experience of his childhood. A relative had died. Just before the dawn of the seventh day Sradh ceremonies, there was a peculiar rhythmic drumming on the large, door sized windows on the east end of their bedroom. It grew louder and some of the children woke up and started to whimper and some to wail in fear. Grandfather called out to the maidservant who slept on the floor at the foot of the bed. The tattooing beat became louder. On the fourth call the sleepy maidservant woke up, shrieked then gingerly opened one of the windows. The sound continued on another. Still terrified, when she opened that window the sound vanished. There was nothing outside – only a pale moon. A little while later, the workers were up and started preparations for the seventh day ceremonies called sradh.

Father told Didi and me about another odd experience when he was about 17 or 18 years old. Prafullanalini, a younger first cousin, had been ill with typhoid and he had gone to see her once or twice. One late afternoon his father sent him word to go to the sick bed. So he hurried there and joined the large group of relatives, some of whom were in tears. The sick girl was speaking. After a while she pointed to the top of a cupboard in the room and said a person was sitting there and that he had come to take her away. Everyone thought she was delirious and continued to apply a cold compress on her forehead. Suddenly there was complete silence and the sick girl said, "Here he comes," and pointed toward the cupboard again. And just then they heard a thud – a sound as of someone landing on the mud floor, as though having jumped from the top of the cupboard. Father told us his hairs stood on end and he broke out in a cold sweat. Shortly after having seen the angel of death, the girl died.

My first daughter Peroshi was born in 1954 and when she was about six months old she died. We had called in doctors from Rangamati as well as from Chittagong. Some thought it was a case of meningitis, for there was the stiffness in the neck and the characteristic and persistent wail, which once heard is not to be forgotten. Some thought it was the mysterious disease, which had carried off many children in Asia at that time. As she had not teethed we buried her according to custom. In her room, beside her bed, the usual offerings were placed along with a plate of wheat flour. My grandfather-in-law Chandra Mohan Dewan and several others kept vigil the whole night in that room. This was in the main bedroom upstairs. My wife Arati and I slept in the adjoining nursery room. At about dusk on the sixth day, one of the windowpanes was shattered as though someone had thrown a stone from downstairs. We checked immediately but it appeared that nobody was trying to

play a practical joke, which in the circumstances would have smacked of cruelty. Early the following morning we were awakened by an aunt who silently beckoned us to the next room. We followed her, and to our utter amazement, saw a perfectly formed child's footprint on the platter of flour.

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The Mro people; traditional dance

CHAPTER XII

Mother's Family

Didima (maternal grandmother), Nirmala Sen belonged to a family of noted lawyers. Her father Purna Chandra Sen, a barrister, served as the Advocate General of Burma, which had become a province of British India in 1862. One of her younger brothers, Justice A.K. Sen was a judge of the Calcutta High Court. The Sens were descended from the Kings of Bengal, Ballal Sen and Lakshman Sen. Legend says that when Bakhtiar Khilji was knocking on the doors of his kingdom Lakshman Sen was asked what he would do when Bakhtiar invaded Bengal. He calmly replied that he would receive the conqueror hospitably, feed him fruits and send him back. The word in Bengali is 'phalahar' (fruit for food). However, when the invasion did take place it is said that the King of Bengal made his absence felt in consonance with the belief in the Sanskrit adage: "jo palayate sho jivate". The rough translation is, "he who runs away, survives," presumably from the battlefield; perhaps to fight another day.

Mother's grandfather Keshab Chandra Sen was a religious reformer of Bengal. Mother told us that his Brahmo Samaj had four symbols – the Cross, the Crescent, the Conchshell and the Lotus representing the four numerically great world religions. She related to us an incident of Keshab Chandra's life. One of his followers, with the intention of assassinating him, once stole into his bedroom at Lily Cottage, Calcutta (now Kolkata) with a knife. Keshab woke up and on recognizing the man said, "You, Chandi?" Chandi lost his nerve and begged pardon. He was forgiven.

Once, on a lecture tour in England when Keshab arrived on the podium he was asked to speak on the subject indicated on the blackboard. There was a big fat zero. The idea was to embarrass him. But he was unfazed and spoke so artlessly and so profoundly on the zero and emptiness and the void that his English audience gave him a standing ovation. Mother told us of the Virgin Mary and St. Theresa, of Moses parting the sea and of Jesus who walked on the waves and who said, "suffer little children to come unto me." We enjoyed these cosy talk sessions in bed as maidservants pressed the legs of our parents, a custom of luxury in the east, and often dozed. By tradition, no menservants were allowed into the bedrooms. When I was thirteen or so and had my own room, I had maidservants to make my bed and generally look after my needs.

We hung up stockings on Christmas eve and celebrated New Year. On Muslim festivals, Eid for instance, the matbars (leaders) of Puranbasti, the oldest Muslim settlement in the Hill Tracts, grown from the nucleus brought in by Maharaja Dharam Bux from his lands in Rangunea, would bring us meat and sweets. On Durga Puja we would go across the river to see the decorated *pandals* and the statues depicting the victorious goddess Durga and the vanquished demon, half-man half-

buffalo Mahisasur, whom she slew. Durga was jointly created by the Triad — Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar (Shiva), for overcoming the powerful tyrant king of the Asuras (Titans). Of course we observed the Buddhist festivals too. My mother celebrated her late father's birthday (before her father's death it was her grandfather Keshab's birthday) every year with a Kalpa Taru (wishing tree). It was done up like a Xmas tree and there were presents for all the children of the area. Every year there were a few unaccounted for servants' children who, however, were not disappointed. Extra presents, without names, were hung up to meet such contingencies. The problem was, while making the list, mother and aunt Sudhira (Kakki) somehow missed one or two additions to the servants' families. And of course the Dom fishermen's children also turned up and to keep a strict census of their births was a trifle difficult. They were prolific breeders and lived huddled together and every year some relatives of theirs from the plains joined them, hence the need for extra presents.

Didima was small with short curly grey hair, a ball of energy of whom everyone went about in dread. She was an incessant talker with a black cigarette holder always in her mouth. When we were small my Didi and I were mortally afraid of her but now we began to appreciate her gregarious bonhomie, her warmheartedness and sense of humour. But in her younger days, we were told when she was cross she showed her temper.

My mother, the second of five siblings and eldest daughter of Barrister Saral Chandra and Nirmala Sen of Calcutta, was born in Surrey, England on 18 August 1907. Her father was studying for the bar then. She used to tell us of being born in England quite often, for she was proud of this fact. She was related to some princely houses, Mayurbhanj in Orissa and the better-known Maharaja of Coochbehar among them. As a boy I recall visiting Woodlands, a beautiful palace in the suburbs of Calcutta where Maharani Suniti Devi of Mayurbhanj, in a widow's white sari received us affectionately. She used to paint and gave mother one of her oil paintings. It was of a lake in the hills that later reminded me of Lake Saiful Muluk in Pakistan. Suniti Devi, one of Keshab Sen's daughters, lived to a ripe old age. Her son, dashing Squadron Leader Dhrubendra, died on duty in a crash during World War II.

Suniti Devi's older sister Sucharu Devi was married to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar who was close to the British Royal family. It was his daughter Ayesha of Coochbehar and Baroda who later became well known as the beautiful and accomplished Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur. The Maharaja of Jaipur was a polo-playing friend of British Royalty, particularly Prince Philip. Gayatri Devi's (Ayesha) mother was the princess of Baroda who had married the prince, my mother's first cousin, who later would be Maharaja of Coochbehar. I met Ayesha in Argentina in 1996 after I had handed over charge, when she came on a visit. I had seen her once in 1975 at Annabel's in London where she was dancing. I was with Laila Muzaffar and some friends. In 1996 she was slimmer and her hair was grey but she was still strikingly sparkling.

I had met her stepson Maharaja Bhabani Singh (Bubbles) at the Indian Presidency in 1956 when he was the President's ADC. In the 1970s my children had gone on a visit to relatives in India. The Maharaja had been kind enough to show them around the Jaipur palaces himself. My youngest son remarked that when I visited Lahore the Faletti's hotel manager also conducted me around like that. Bubbles took no offence and had a good laugh. He visited Argentina for polo on a number of occasions and came to see me a few times. Once he brought his wife, Maharani Padmini and his young daughter, about 15 then, a pretty princess with poise, for dinner at our residence. His father had served as India's Ambassador to Spain, and Rajmata Maharani Gayatri Devi has mentioned it in her book. Maharaja Bhabani Singh also followed in his father's footsteps and served as India's Ambassador abroad.

Mother's next sister Sadhona Bose was, in her days, a popular film actress and one of the top Indian dancers. She was the first girl from a good family to become a professional actress and dancer. In those days, I believe it needed a lot of courage to face raised eyebrows. Under the guidance of her husband, acclaimed film Director Madhu Bose, some of her films won fame. Raj Nartaki (Court Dancer) was one of them. I was privileged to see the film though I was only about eight then. After her marriage when Sadhona and his relative Madhu went to call on Rabindranath Tagore, he said to the bride that she was no longer Sadhona but "Madhur Madhuri," (Madhu's tenderness).

Mother was a brilliant student, having won a number of gold medals and what not. At eighteen she had to leave college and cosmopolitan Calcutta to marry father, and come and live in primitive Rangamati. Mother had great admiration for her father-in-law, Raja Bhuvan, Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore and the English. Temperamentally she was diametrically the opposite of father. She was volatile, mercurial, warm and generous, gregarious and full of life. She took after her father Saral Sen who was tall but she inherited her mother's volatility more than her father's tranquil nature. Her father, however, being a barrister was intellectually acute, some of which seemed to have been a part of mother's mental make up. Apart from producing and directing dramatic plays, she wrote prose and poetry in both English and Bengali and used to bring out an annual magazine called *Gairika*, for many years. The word was coined for her by Rabindranath Tagore to mean "girikanya," Daughter of the Hills. In this magazine there used to be informative articles in English and Bengali on indigenous culture, jum, with excerpts from ancient epics, folklore and ubagit. The best known was named after a village belle called Tanyabi:

Tanyabi ranyat jei
Suguri dadi tanelloi
Puran kada hidath tuli
Gujuri gujuri kanelloi

Going to the *ranya*, last year's jum, Tanyabi, / while tugging at pumpkin creepers, /is assailed with memories of the past, / and sobs aloud in anguish. /

But just as there are songs of poignancy, equally there are as many earthy, bawdy and loin–warming songs that describe the nuances in the movements and gestures of a woman, for example:

Najang najang pungari
Hajang hajang mugari

(In a near dance of swaying hips/and a half smile on her lips).

Mother was always a voracious reader, and her taste was catholic. She played the violin, the piano and the harmonium, the sitar and the esraj and also sang. In almost all cultured Bengali homes of her time girls would be brought up with some facility at playing at least the harmonium and singing Bengali songs, especially Rabindra sangeet, songs composed by Tagore. In East Bengal from the late 1940s Nazrul giti (songs of the poet Nazrul Islam) also became a great favourite in addition to Bengal's darling, the Nobel Prize winner Tagore. Many considered mother an engaging conversationalist including British high ups and Governor General Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin. When he visited Rangamati as Governor General mother was sitting next to him at a dinner. She told me that she had to contend with the ear with impaired hearing, (the other ear was all right), but somehow managed to converse with him. They also talked of some of her relatives who were at Cambridge University with Sir Nazimuddin, who then was not so overweight and was a tennis blue in the bargain.

Raja Tridiv Roy: With his mother Rani Benita Roy and
Raj Kumari Amiti Roy (Didi),Circa 1940

CHAPTER XIII

My Childhood

Mother had been fussed over ever since grandfather heard a grandson was in the offing. Everyone made the wish father to the thought. And mother prayed that it should be a boy. She knew father was being induced to marry again. Five years had gone by since their marriage and no child appeared, so many people whispered that the foreign lady (to the hillpeople a Bengali is very much a foreigner) was barren. Mother used to nurse her sorrow in secret but she was not one to sit and mope. She had shamans – ojhas, astrologers, baidyas and witch doctors – dropping in with charms, amulets and herbs. On 11 January 1932 my elder sister (Didi) was born in our Chittagong house. There was great rejoicing and the foreigner was absolved of the stigma of sterility. But until she produced a male child she could not be considered as having done her duty.

"I know they are looking for another wife for you," she said to father.

"They better hurry," father said in reply. "Or I'll have to do the searching myself." In fact a very beautiful Chakma girl, Bindubashini, was a hot favourite in court circles. She was the daughter of a Dewan in the Chengi valley, a cousin of Pratul Dewan who later married aunt Sushamabala. Mother knew he was only teasing her but it did not help assuage the pain and the feeling of inadequacy. As a child if I was annoyed with mother I used to say, "father should have married Bindubashini and not you."

At my sister's tonsure ceremony – she was about a couple of weeks old – the barber touched his scalpel with black pepper. Mother was nervous because the man's hands shook with age. But it was unthinkable to have any other barber than old Lakshminapit, the family one, to do the honours. The ceremony ended with Lakshminapit touching the baby's navel with the scalpel. The introduction of the pepper motif was due to the widely held view that it puts some pep into a baby. And it did. She proclaimed her presence, if not her personality, by loud yells during a goodly portion of her waking hours.

Her name giving ceremony, some months later, was duly solemnized in traditional style. The Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who was a respected family friend, coined a new word in the Bengali language for her: Amiti. She had for godmother the wife of the Governor of Bengal and Assam, Lady Reid, who gave her name to my sister. So, Didi had two names, AMITI and AMY. Years later, my second sister Moitri was given the second name of Marian, after her godmother Marian Casey, wife of the Governor of Bengal. Both Reid and Casey later became Governors General of Australia.

Charms and amulets – to produce a male child, increased. Mother must have had dozens around her neck and arms. So did the prayers. Mother prayed to the Buddha and tried to placate–or bribe him. She said if he blessed her with a son she would present him, the eight-metalled Buddha statue called Gotamuni, with an umbrella of gold. Lest the Buddha take it as an affront, or a clearcut case of attempted bribery, she mitigated it with a vow. She would send the son to Bodhgaya where he would don the yellow robes and become a novitiate. She did not specify the duration of novicehood but she was sure the Buddha wouldn't worry over such minor details. I redeemed her pledge in 1956 when, after attending the 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations in New Delhi, I went to Bodhgaya and became a *sramanera* for a week. It was a week of unmitigated peace and serenity and a most rewarding experience, under the guidance and tutelage of our Rajanagar Rajguru, the Ven'ble Dharmaratna Mahasthavir, Vinayavisarad, Tattavaridhi. Another memorable retreat for me was the Tibetan Tara Verde (Green Tara) course under Lama Sherab beside a lake in San Martin de Los Andes, Argentina, many years later.

I was born on 14 May 1933, a Taurean with Gemini as ascendant, under the influence of Venus, which in the eastern astrological system means Dhanu *rashi*, Mithuna *lagna* and Purbasara *nakshatra*. It was the time of lychees and mother used to gaze longingly at the ripe, russet pink clusters. They were a little more than an arm's length away from her upstairs dressing room window. She was only allowed to eat a very few. The few, however, so accelerated my advent that the lady doctor supposed to come from Chittagong town had not even started packing for her trip to Rangamati.

My advent at 7 on that May morning at the Rajbari, Rangamati, therefore, caused a bit of a flurry including, of course, firing of guns, an even number to denote a male birth. The moment I was bathed, one of my father's sisters, Rajkumari Sushamabala, rushed me downstairs to the western wing and plonked me down on grandfather's lap. The "Old Raja" rejoiced. "Here, take your husband," he said to grandma. "He has come at last." Coupling someone's name with a grandparent or grandchild of the opposite sex is common amongst the Chakmas as it is considered a "joking relationship."

Didi, sixteen months my senior, and I grew up without knowing boredom. There was always a crowd of cousins and servants' children and games and festivals. We moved in our respective orbits and maintained a sort of uneasy truce between wars. At games with "Ghila" – the seed of a creeper that is roughly like a disc – it was boys versus girls and at these games a natural conclusion was rare. They broke up with allegations and counter allegations of cheating. The rare games of cards with the girls were no different. We played a sort of three handed whist we called "Bruce" and "Twenty Nine" (some called it 28). I remember a code Didi and her close companion, cousin Dulu, had devised. I cracked it without much difficulty – not because it was ingenuous – but because its applicability was all too frequent and unsubtle. Club was a cauliflower, diamond a hilsa fish, heart a tomato and a spade

was the platter on which *paan* (betel leaves packed with sliced areca nuts) was served after meals to the grown ups. Yet we were close.

Then there was a succession of governesses and tutors and sola topees which we had to wear, and the abominable but supposedly nutritious horror – milk – which one was forced to drink. Occasional bouts of malaria, elephant rides (the number had dwindled to two – the Tusker called Ranjit and the sedate Tamalini), picnics, excursions, three week annual Mayani tours, and the Punyah. Early in the morning father would ask, "How many days to the Punyah?" And Didi and I would vie to be the first with the answer. It started when it was a little less than a month away. We slept on two huge four-posters under mosquito nets and I always slept next to father. I loved to hold his forearms. They were so cool and reassuring, and his skin was so incredibly smooth. He was reserved by temperament and there was a certain aloofness that was not the result of indifference but of a different level of life, of thoughts, of mind. This was always a part of him. But he was an affectionate father and friendly and I'd straddle his tummy and bounce when he was in a playful mood.

We were, as children, never given money. If we wanted something we might ask and we would get it sometimes, and not get it at others, but always in kind. Maybe it was not a good thing because when I grew up I had not learnt to give money the value it is supposed to have. Another rule was, if I went across the river to the District Headquarters, I always had to be accompanied by a bodyguard, a sepoy (a policeman with his monogrammed belt and CRS – Chakma Raja's Service and metal bits on his shoulder straps). And the bazar at the peninsular end of lower Rangamati was forbidden territory. On our side of the river we were of course free to roam where we pleased.

It was great fun to organize raids on the sugarcane fields of the Sowdagar – a Muslim tenant of ours who used to grow sugarcane, *paan* and all manner of crops. Raiding was great pleasure. Once, a gang of us raided the ripening lychees of the Raja's garden. When the alarm was sounded everyone escaped. Being the youngest I was down the tree and halfway up the slit bamboo fencing when the Manager arrived on the scene. I was caught red handed. The Manager was my father's first cousin. He asked me for my friends' names. These I refused to divulge. He chided me gently and said I should wait for the fruits to ripen and again tried to get me to squeal. Unsuccessfully. When he left, my comment was – "show off, bragging because he's the Raja's manager." I identified myself wholly with the robbers.

The family Brahmin from Rajanagar used to turn up at Rangamati once or twice a year. He would read palms as well as the horoscopes, Kusti or Janampatri (life charts) that he or his father had cast. He would sometimes say that an angry Graha (planet) or Rahu (a demon who causes eclipses), or Ketu (comet) was in malevolent alignment. This was his way to wangle the performance of an occasional puja that translated into monetary gains for him. Father treated these pronouncements with mild amusement. Mother was half credulous but would prefer to play it safe and have the pujas performed.

Kakki (my aunt Sudhira) was a great believer and would pore over the almanac. She used to tell us, if we saw a shooting star we should in one breath recite the names of a set of seven brahmins, rivers, flowers and something else I cannot recall. Anyhow, if the *jogini,* a potent malefic force in the firmament was in the south she would go out through the north or by an eastern door, detour or walk backwards but not face south directly. Kakku would chase away soothsayers who crowded around Kakki like predators when the Lord and Master was not in sight. If he was at home they stayed across the bridge that separated the approach road to Sreeketan from the main road. This road led to the public river ghat (ferry crossing) and in our childhood people would call it the Company Path, after the East India Company. It headed east towards the Subalong Hills. A half-mile stretch of about two feet width from the river was metalled.

One day in the early 1940s in Chittagong, one Surya Sadhu had predicted that father would hurt himself suddenly, and pretty soon, unless the Sadhu neutralized the baneful influence of the offending planet. He drew up an impressive list of items he would need for his puja and asked for the money. In polite language father told him to go to hell. Mother did not like it. After a week, one afternoon, as he was lifting the cash box (an inseparable item in travels and as indispensable as the bedding roll), father cried out in simulated pain. Mother was at the other end of the room. She triumphantly announced the classic, "Didn't I tell you?" But when she found it was a hoax she was not all that amused. But father was, and the rest of us.

Chakmas are rather irreverent people sometimes, and see through many charlatans masquerading as sadhus or soothsayers. One such, one day went to the house of a Chakma and on his refusal to pay him to perform a puja called down the wrath of heaven. When he could not cow the man down nor extort any money he grew abusive. The hillman, quietly and efficiently, and literally kicked him out of his house from off the raised latticed platform. "There you are", he said. "If you knew as much about your own future as you do about mine, may be you wouldn't have troubled to come at all." But on the whole they were and still are credulous and just as curious about the future as anyone else.

Of all those who left their imprints on my childhood days two stand out – my Ayah and our Dhobi (washerman). There were a number of Ayahs coming and going, including one called Parvati from Hyderabad Deccan, but Negjan Ayah stayed the longest. To me she was "Ayahbu," short for bubu (elder sister). She was a devout Bengali Muslim and while she said her prayers I would also often do the same on a prayermat beside her. She used to drink tea in an aluminium mug and often enough she would put puffed rice (muri) in her tea. I love muri in tea, especially in an aluminium mug. Once Ayahbu had a fight with another old maidservant, Mayantarma (mother of Mayanta). Elderly people were not called by their names especially by children, in deference to their age. I still remember, it was late in the afternoon and my parents were in the nachkhana playing tennis. I found a tennis racquet between two cupboards and started lashing out at Mayantarma. I did hit her on the legs and she relinquished her hold on Ayahbu and fled. Ayahbu in return drew

me to her breast, and that was the only time I remember her crying. On another occasion I had been rude to my tutor. Didi and I had quite a number. They always seemed to change, like Didi's governesses who were English or Anglo-Indian. Ayahbu took me to him. "Apologize, this instant," she ordered, "or I'll burn your mouth." She got out a matchstick and lit it. Ayahbu was stern and I am told she used to beat me with a thin stick sometimes.

In 1938, my parents were staying in Chandraghona for a few days, having gone there to visit a sick relative at the hospital there. As I had been having some health problems they requested the doctor to have me examined. My parents were reluctant at first but the missionary Doctor Taichmann prevailed upon them to let him take out my infected tonsils. They had opened a children's section in the Arthington Baptist Mission Hospital on the Hill Tracts border with Chittagong, and I was the first patient (victim as far as I was concerned) to be operated upon. I clung to Ayahbu and one nurse not succeeding, two had to drag me away from her to get me into the operation theatre. She prayed all the time, refusing food or drink. And when I regained consciousness, I am told, the first person I asked for was "Ayahbu". When she grew old and frail she retired to her village home in Chittagong and father, in appreciation, gifted her some land from our Chittagong Estate. For some time during the war years of 1939-45, Dr. Taichmann was said to have been interned because of his German parentage but the rumour was not confirmed. Internment was probable, as was the case with Heinrich Harrier, who had escaped from an internment camp to Tibet. He wrote "Seven years in Tibet". I read the book years ago and recently enjoyed the film based on his book. I owe him a great deal, for I would have had a sickly existence, if that, had his persuasive counsel not prevailed.

Haridas was our dhobi, and we knew him as "Sadhu". He was a Vaisnava with sandalwood paste on his forehead and arms, in the shape of a trident. His eyes were always red for he was a ganja (marijuana) addict. He told us fascinating fairy tales and stories from the Ramayan and Mahabharat. He made us wooden swords of many shapes and styles, and bows and arrows. One type of bow could be drawn, that is the arrow set to the bowstring and pulled, but on release it would only move a few inches. The arrow was fixed through a hole in the bow. And he taught us a game called Dudha, a variety of tag with its own set of rules. It had to be played amidst the branches of a tree. One favourite tree for this game was one of several in a row on the edge of the temple compound to the east. When they flowered these fragrant white *nageswars* with yellow centres looked like poached eggs. Some of our elders used to snigger at our calling him Sadhu for they said he was most unlike a sadhu (hermit or holy man), with his addiction to drugs and general unholiness but they conveniently forgot that Shiva was himself a connoisseur of drugs. It made no difference. He was always kind to us and made the most exquisite kites too and knew all about "manja" – ground glass mixed with certain starches and juices of herbs to strengthen the string. I do not recall what happened to him and his old father, but they had left Rangamati when I was still a young boy.

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CHAPTER XIV

Father holds Court

The Chengi lost its identity in the Karnafuli about a mile above Rangamati. Seven tortuous miles up the tributary was Rajbilash. During the monsoons Dipali, our little motor launch, could inch its way up the strong current. At other times there was not enough depth even for her shallow draught. We used then to wend our way up in the houseboat – punt, punt, punting all the way.

Grandfather had created Rajbilash (Raja's Pleasance) at the end of the 19th century. He carved a farm out of marshes and laid out an orchard on a cluster of low hills. Later it also served as headquarters of a "Khas mauza" (a territorial unit in the Chittagong Hill Tracts administered directly by the Chief rather than through a headman).

Rajbilash was a retreat of sorts, where, when he arrived unannounced, he could hibernate in peace and quiet. Grandmother, his second Rani, used to tell me with a naughty twinkle in her eye that whenever that happened it was not for a spiritual breather as he would have her believe but for a spell of uninterrupted fun and frolic. Possibly the romantic soul combined both.

Ever since I can remember, father visited Rajbilash every November with me eagerly in tow. Sometimes uncles, aunts and cousins went along on the spree – three or four idyllic days of hunting, fishing, or wandering around the forested hills. The moment the boat was sighted shotguns and crackers went off to herald our arrival. The Karbaris and other village elders greeted father at the water's edge and they were soon engrossed in cheerful chit-chat.

The house – a bamboo and thatch affair – was perched on a hill overlooking the Chengi on the west. It had half a dozen or so rooms with a long veranda fronting the half-circle of eastern hills. A good sized yard, shaded by mango trees, sported a series of smaller huts to the north. These served as kitchen and staff quarters in normal times. When the Rangamati contingent arrived, they took in the overflow. Keru, the leader of the Santhal labourers, was straight backed and strong and perennially eighty years old. Soon after our arrival these lithe, dusky, aborigines from Bihar performed their tribal dance. Keru's age-gnarled hands worked the wooden castanets with easy elegance and the crow's feet around his expressive eyes crinkled in nostalgia.

The morning after our arrival officers collected revenue and father tried cases that had been adjourned for local trial. These were, however, merely adjuncts to a continuous round of festivities, games and wrestling matches. Father was to all intents and purposes a teetotaller but he was not churlish, and after sunset country

liquor flowed unhindered. Yet, only once did I observe a man not carrying his liquor well. But then he soon tired of his acrobatic antics and folded up like a swan at sleep.

In the evening a genkhuli presented himself and people gathered around a log fire in the backyard. Whenever the wandering singer ran out of breath he picked up his crude violin and sawed away frenziedly, or sipped ambrosiac rice-beer. Young and old joined in the refrain with a lusty "reng," the Chakma version of a yodel. These songs of love and valour continued unabated until the paling skies ushered in a pink new dawn.

Across the Chengi was the "Firti," an oxbow lake. While the sedate elders crossed over in boats and relaxed under a striped awning, we romped about and had delectable mud fights. When overzealous servants intervened we kept them at bay with mudballs. It was sheer ecstasy to witness the undignified retreat of the routed enemy forces, their clean white clothes a dirty dripping brown. When a Brobdingnagian gathered up a squealing Gulliver, however, and dumped him on terra firma, the displeasure was entirely ours. Perpetually gesticulating fishermen in little dinghies started closing in the drag-net. Impelled by a burst of fear many a nervous carp leaped into the air. Most capered back to their ineluctable doom but once in a while one dived across the net – and into liberty. As a sporting gesture and the catch being abundant the net was seldom dragged more than once, or twice.

The darling of the crowd was the square brown wooden "His Master's Voice" gramophone. Someone cranked the thing and Kanan Devi started to trill. At the impact of her mushy songs some of the grown-ups shut their eyes and beat time with their feet. When Saigal opened up in his deep and languorous voice they shook their heads from side to side in a state of semi-stupor. They were songs of separation or unrequited love and we never could understand why grown-ups relished sadness. We hunted squirrel and bird with bamboo catapults and sunbaked clay pellets, or challenged the girls to games with ghila. Of an evening, I recollect listening enthralled, to exotic fables and fairy tales. Or we had extended riddle-sessions. The simplest was the one about ponds on treetops: coconuts. Mercifully, no one was devoured by any Chakma sphinx nor did any of our girl friends throw herself into the Chengi; none to my knowledge, that is.

I recall father telling me early one morning that it was here at Rajbilash that he had received his first and last corporal punishment from grandfather. His older sister and he grappled in a mock fight and she knocked him down unceremoniously. Smarting with affront, he got up and they resumed the wrestling match, this time in earnest. He won but as his opponent fell, her head thudded into the wooden railing of the four-poster and she promptly lost consciousness. As a decoration she wore a lump like a gladiolus bulb at the back of her head for the next few days. Father's laurel took the form of a sound box on the ears.

"How old were you then?" I asked, looking at the same ornate old bedstead. Father's deeply compassionate eyes lit up in fond memory. "About your age," he said

smiling, "seven or eight." He turned to one of my companions. "Does your father beat you?" The boy shook his head in denial. "But mother does," he added. With a thoughtful look he enquired shyly if the same had held true with father. "No," father said and rumpled the little boy's hair. "But that's because she wasn't there to beat me."

Thinking back on that exchange, I recollect my aunt telling me that father was not even three when their mother had died. And when in the middle of the night the child cried out in hunger, grandfather pacified him with a biscuit. In those days cow's milk had not come into its own. Yet self-pity is something father had never known in his lifetime. He was too concerned about the needs of others to bother about his own.

On one such annual excursion, when I was a little older, I sat beside father while he held court under the spread of a mango tree. When the scheduled cases were disposed of, a young man got up from the crowd of spectators and came forward with a piece of foolscap paper. He kowtowed and submitted his petition, which had the court-fee – a rupee note – attached with a safetypin. Father glanced through the paper rapidly and laid it on the table. He then told me, sotto voce, that for a first impression you did not get bogged down in details, you read the gist in the last paragraph or two.

"So, what's your problem?"

"My Lord, I want to divorce my wife."

A sudden hush descended upon the spectators, for it is unusual for a hillman to sue for divorce. The normal practice is to delegate the privilege to his better half and to ensure that she exercised it, by beating her black and blue, or generally making her life unsavoury. On father's enquiring of the respondent's whereabouts an old man thrust his daughter forward. She was about eighteen, clear complexioned and plump, with a placid face and gentle eyes. She was dressed in the customary red-bordered blue "Pinan" (skirt), a nondescript blouse, and wrapped over it the flamboyant "Khadi," a striped breastcloth in screaming primary colours. She approached shyly and touched father's feet.

"All right, Chebeda," father said to the strapping young man, "now tell us why you want a divorce."

Chebeda studiously avoided looking at his wife, who stared at the ground in unallayed fascination.

"My Lord," he said with a quavering voice, "she is not a woman." Casting her a fleeting glance he explained what she was. "She is an ogress and a vampire."

The woman flushed but held her peace and continued to doodle on the ground with her big toe.

"One night," the aggrieved husband continued, "she cut my throat."

There was a murmur of interest in the swelling crowd. The woman's father could not contain himself and called out. "Rangabi," he said sternly, "tell the Raja....."

Father held up an admonitory hand. "In good time. Let him have his say". He then addressed Chebeda. "Come here, let me see your wound."

Chebeda shuffled forward with a woebegone expression and displayed a brand new scar on the side of his neck. It was not unimpressive to gaze upon.

"A nick at shave is larger than that," father said casually. "Be precise. Resume". In an aside to me, he said, "The man has the luck of the devil; should have been dead by all accounts."

"I opened my eyes." Chebeda paused for dramatic effect. "And there she was sawing away as if I were a dead log."

"You would have been," the woman said sharply, "if I had not changed my mind."

Father ignored the interruption. "Is there any reason," he asked, "why she should mistake you for a log?" He continued equably, "was she drunk? Has she failing eyesight?"

"We had a slight difference of opinion during the day," Chebeda admitted reluctantly. "And I gave her advice and instructions."

"Rangabi, are you practising with a view to becoming a butcher's apprentice in your next incarnation?"

"My Lord, when he gets drunk," Rangabi said, transferring her weight to the other foot, "he becomes obnoxious and takes it out on me." With a pensive air she embarked upon a recital of her woes. "Either my cooking is atrocious, or I have neglected a chore, or the child is dirty – any old excuse will do. I am always wrong and he is always right, so he 'instructs' me. She removed her Khadi and fumbled with her blouse buttons. "Here are the marks of his instructions." She came closer and turned her back to expose fading welts.

Euphemism debunked, Chebeda looked uncomfortable. "Lord, there are marks on my thighs and bruises all over me." She buttoned her blouse and sighed. "I tried – I tried so hard to make a go of our marriage." She blinked rapidly to thrust back the fastgathering tears. "Give him a divorce." Wistfully she added, "I wanted to kill him, to teach a lesson to all wife – beaters." She swallowed back a choke and

cleared her throat. "But when the knife touched his throat and he opened his eyes I could not."

"Why?" Father asked, elaborately nonchalant.

"When I looked into his eyes," Rangabi said in a hesitant, near whisper, "my hate faded."

There was silence.

"Where is the child?" Father asked. "And how old is he?"
"He's with my mother," Chebeda said, "and he's two years old," he ended proudly.

It transpired that a fortnight had elapsed since their estrangement. Her spouse had refused to have her in the same house after the abortive sawing episode, so Rangabi had been sent away to her father's home.

Father spoke softly. "So you want a divorce too, do you?"

"Yes," Rangabi thrust out her chin. "If he wants it, I want it too. But I want my child."
"My Lord," Chebeda interposed quickly, "she can't have him, if she can't have me." He added triumphantly, "He's not a suckling babe any more. He's been weaned."

"But you haven't," Rangabi snapped, "the way you listen to everything your mother says."

"There, see how obstreperous she is," Chebeda said querulously. "Even you would beat a wife like that, saving your presence, my Lord."

Nodding thoughtfully, father pondered the question. "Perhaps I would," he conceded, "and perhaps I couldn't; depending in the first place on how favourably my wife reacted on gazing into my eyes."

He looked from one to the other speculatively for a moment before pronouncing judgment: "The two of you will remain here now. After three days, if you both want a divorce you will get it."

Court adjourned.

During the day Chebeda and Rangabi were made to work together. At night they were billeted in a one-roomed shack with a well-padded mattress and a thin cotton quilt that was meant for a single person. It was late November and cold. Being too young to fathom his motive I considered father's action as not only uncharacteristic, but harsh. When I hinted as much he only smiled.

After breakfast the third morning, father summoned them. "No work today," he said. "Do as you please."

They looked at each other and shuffled around hesitantly.
"Incidentally," father added, "we have to borrow your quilt. Another Karbari has come and he will be staying the night." He offered in consolation. "But I'm sure we can find you an extra bedsheet."

"My Lord," Chebeda said tentatively, "may we go home?"

"Yes, if you have both decided."

"We have." He sounded relieved.

Father looked at Rangabi. "Of course you both want a divorce," he stated flatly.

Rangabi fidgeted and avoided father's eye, as did Chebeda.

"No, my Lord", Chebeda said finally. "I've decided to drink less – and she to talk less."

"And we'll build our own house," Rangabi put in shyly, "and cultivate our own jum."

Father looked at me with a sombre expression. "What would you say, son? They wanted a divorce – shouldn't I give it to them?"

"No," I replied in consternation.

"Three against one," father said blandly and turned to the pair. "All right," he said, "go in peace."

An annual feature, as regular as the Punyah Festival, was the Mayani mofussil (tour). Sometimes Didi would accompany us but invariably I accompanied father. Mayani is the name of a tributary of the Kassalong which in turn flows into the Karnafuli River. The Mayani valley was in the Chakma territory but it was a reserved forest in my grandfather's time. There being a scarcity of jumming land a number of Chakmas had forcibly entered the reserve and cut many jums. There was some trouble in trying to evict the people and the government sought my grandfather's help. He sorted out the law and order problem without mass arrests or violence, by some compromise formula. After that the reserved forest was redemarcated and in the deforested area mauzas were created and people from downstream settled there.

When we were children there were plenty of wild elephants roaming around. The area between Merung and Hazachara in particular was a favourite haunt of these pachyderms that would frolic in the river at night. Consequently, no boats would ply

at night on this stretch. In 1946 or thereabouts, a Sub-Divisional Magistrate once was rash enough to force his boatmen to continue into this area at night and was nearly trampled to death. The elephants merely played around and smashed one or two of the bamboo and thatch roofs on the boats called "pong," while the boatmen fled in terror and the magistrate prayed in silence.

On these Mayani tours there would be two huge dugout countryboats, eight or ten "biong" in length, a measure equivalent to one's outstretched arms (about five and a half feet). The cheerful and talented Rasik Mohan Dewan, Nilanalini's husband, father's cousin and top official, occupied the bow and father and I the stern. The pong or roof is semi-circular and there is a gap between them, over the centre of the boat. Two men thrust bamboo poles into the shallow waters. Bent double, with their weight on the poles, they briskly walk the length of the boat, skipping over the gap in the middle. They give a final push and a flick of the wrist when at the stern, draw out the poles, walk forward to the fore and in unison thrust the poles into the river again and resume. This punting process is used only when going upstream. Coming downstream the boatmen use their oars, two of them. The oars, being tied and fitted with cane always creak. One British Deputy Commissioner found he could not sleep with the noise and unsuccessfully tried to get rid of it by pouring oil on the rowlocks. To me, however, the rhythmic sound was soothing. The second boat was the kitchen boat, with the servants and the family doctor.

At every halt Headmen, Karbaris and members of the public welcomed us. They would fire crackers and shotgun shells into the air, and there would be bamboo gates and bunting. There would be feasting and the paying of taxes and revenues and discussions about local problems. At night halts we would be the guest of a Headman or Karbari and stay in his house. Once in a while we would sleep in the boats.

Unless we went further up river to Babuchara, we camped at the terminal point of the tour, Hutchinsonpur at Boalkhali. It was a bamboo house on a little hill named after a Deputy Commissioner who had resolved the reserved forest incursions without severe measures. We halted here for two or three days. Normally an officer stayed here and when we arrived he went into his subordinate's house a few yards away. Jatiya (national) cases were tried here.

In a trial of national cases (Jatiya bichar) the Headman, the Karbaris and village elders as well as any adults that wished, assembled. It is like a jirga in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan. Among the Chakmas, to convene a trial an aggrieved party had to pay seven rupees as Raja Nazar, a bottle of country liquor to the presiding Headman or Karbari and also three rupees as "Khua Bhangani"; literally "fog dispersal." However, in the Raja's court the court fee was only one rupee but of course the parties had to spend money travelling to and fro at adjournments. The more serious cases and also appeals against the Headmen's courts went to the Raja.

The Raja's residence being by tradition open house there was a procession of callers, coming and going. They were treated hospitably as is customary. By custom

only the male of a species is permissible as a present. So people brought he-goats, roosters, unpland rice of various kinds, yoghurt in bamboo tubes, fruits and vegetables. On the return journey there was always one or two extra boats to carry these gifts. On return to Rangamati these would be distributed amongst relatives and staff. The goats were a bit of a bother requiring pandering to their voracious appetites, but they were a token of affection and esteem and to leave them or give them away at Mayani would be considered impolite, the implication being the gift was not appreciated by the Raja.

On the second day we would visit the temple on the hill, hardly fifty yards away, light candles and hear mantras from the monks. In the mid-1960s, a mile or so from here in Dighinala Mauza there lived a monk who, unlike the other monks that live in monasteries, used to live alone in the forests and was consequently known as Bana Bhante (the Forest Monk). He was originally from Balukhali Mauza but appeared in the forests of Dhanpata in the adjacent Magban mauza on the eastern bank of the Karnafuli, a few miles below Rangamati, around 1948. There were many stories afloat about his psychic powers. On one Mayani tour my youngest sister Rakhi went to see him in Dighinala with some of her friends and asked many questions concerning her future. One was answered. Her desire to go to a far away country would be fulfilled in a short while. A few months later she was accepted at Mount Holyoke College, in the States. Later on she graduated from there and continued with further studies in the US. She married Maharaj Kumar Jayasinhji Jhala, son of the Maharaja of Dhrangadhra, a former native state in today's Gujarat state. They have two daughters. He teaches anthropology at Temple University in the States. The Bana Bhante is held in great reverence. He moved to Anil Chairman's Langadu Mauza where I went to pay my respects. Subsequently he moved to Rangamati, on our lands near the Rajbari, where even today a great number of people come to pay homage to him and receive his blessings.

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CHAPTER XV

Schooldays

The Japanese invaded Burma on 20 January 1942, then Singapore fell on 15 February 1942. It was the last of the much flaunted 'impregnable' bastion of British might in the East. The Japanese then took Rangoon on 8 March 1942. Rice from Southeast Asia, especially Burma, into India stopped. The Hill Tracts, which was usually surplus in rice, had a bad harvest. Consequently, in 1943 occurred the devastating Bengal famine, when even in the hills many had to subsist on wild roots and arum. Particularly in Calcutta there were pathetic scenes of people, many of whom had come in from the countryside, begging and literally dying by the wayside. The Japanese had taken Imphal in Manipur and were bombing Chittagong and Diamond Harbour and its surrounds in Calcutta and there was a fear of an imminent Japanese invasion. The Deputy Commissioner G.L. Hyde wrote a secret letter to father asking him to carry on with the administration, without him, as he might leave shortly rather than face "useless capture". The police and other government departments would serve him with wholehearted loyalty, Hyde wrote.

In early 1943 our parents, with a whole retinue, left for Calcutta because mother needed to undergo a surgical operation and she had selected Colonel Gow, an eminent surgeon in Calcutta. Didi and I were sorely disappointed at being left behind because we wanted to go along. However, we were happy in that we were left in the care of Kakku and Kakki whom we loved dearly. We shifted to their house, Sreeketan, a beautiful red brick house that Kakku had built a year or two earlier, about a quarter of a mile from the Rajbari. It was locally called Lalkuthi because the house was red, the same name as the Tangchangya's gift to Dharam Bux in the early 1800s that later became the Chittagong Divisional Commissioner's House and was painted white.

In a short while I was down with a bout of malaria. The family doctor Jogesh Sircar having accompanied my parents, the government doctor from across the river was called in. This chappie did not believe in tablets and mixtures and without preamble got ready his fearful instruments for an injection. I flatly refused. My uncle and aunt and cousins and relatives had all gathered around and tried to cajole me into taking the shot. After a lot of bargaining – it started with ten rupees – I agreed, at a hundred. After the shot was administered, I asked for the money. "It's in your treasury and what's your father's is yours," said my uncle suavely. "So what's the harm in letting it remain where it is?" If I wanted anything he would get it for me. Kakku, I think was wordly-wise, in taking recourse to the subterfuge. That was a practical demonstration and a lesson in "greed never pays," for had I asked for less I would perhaps have go it. The 1943 hundred rupees were, when I look back on it, a little too much for a young boy. But I knew, had it been my father I would have got it – provided he had promised. The Deputy Commissioner Major (later Lt. Col.)

George L. Hyde had persuaded Kakku to join government service as the District Supply Officer, which later changed to District Controller, Civil Supplies. (When the world war ended in 1945, the Viceroy Field Marshal Lord Wavell conferred the title "Rai Bahadur" to Kakku for his distinguished services, on 1 January 1946. The correct way to write his name was Rai Kumar Birupaksha Roy Bahadur. He was bluff, hale and hearty and like father he was taller and bigger than the average Chakma. Some of the simple hill folk used to say "Lal Bahadur", the closest they could get to Rai Bahadur. Lal Bahadur was the name of the government elephant and he was a huge tusker. Kakku was never offended and would laugh at being called Lal Bahadur.)

In the midst of all the tragic misfortune of war and famine in 1943, my parents went to Calcutta a second time because the surgical operation having been successful mother was told to stay somewhere near and not in some obscure unheard of place where obstertricians relied on nature and failing that on the patient's refusal to die to win through any complications. After the operation, Colonel Gow, the same Scots doctor who had brought Vivien Leigh into the world (purely in his medical capacity) had said the unborn baby was all right. This time Didi and I were taken along. Father rented a house, 72 Lansdowne Road.

Shankara, the Oriya servant who had originally worked for mother's parents and had joined us at Rangamati a year or two earlier, used to take mother's meals to the hospital everyday. On the evening of 22 August 1943 my brother Samit was born in the Elgin Nursing Home in Calcutta. Returning from the hospital, as soon as Shankara entered the gate he shouted out the news and started dancing with joy. The doctor gave the baby the names John Bull and Peter Bright Eyes, so he was called Johnny. Amongst friends and relatives that called on us was also Bhaiya, the name by which the Maharaja Jagadipendra Narayan of Coochbehar was best known. He was quite amiable and jolly and was outstanding in that he was six foot tall, which was unusual for people of Bengal and its neighbouring regions. The Maharaja had joined the army and I do not remember if he was in khaki but I do recall he wore a bushshirt, which in any case was worn by most army officers, when he visited a relative's, Tuni Mashi's, house.

My first school had been St. Scholastica's Covent, Chittagong. Didi was a day scholar, in Standard II. My parents thought it might do me a bit of good to have regular hours, for I was getting a wee bit wild. I think they saw no difference in either dress or demeanour between my friends, mostly servants' children, and me and thought I demonstrated the makings of a yokel of no mean merit. At any rate I was enrolled in the 1st Standard at – horror of horrors – a girls' school in early 1940. I was not yet seven. I wanted to be back in Rangamati with my chums but stuck it out for the duration, maybe six months.

My next academic bout – save the everchanging private tutors at home – was in 1943 when I found myself in St. Xavier's, Calcutta in Standard II. Studies were taken seriously at this Belgian Jesuit School and there was a short ball of terror in the

form of a priest called Father Tant to enforce it. He was the Father Prefect and had no qualms about swinging a leather strap. We knew this. My class teacher was Bampton, neatly dressed, stern but not harsh. Purnabrata Sen, a friend of mother's older brother Sunit Sen, was engaged as private tutor for me for a couple of months, in addition to Ratish Majumder from Barisal District, who was the accompanying full time private tutor for Didi and me. I wasn't doing too badly. After the first months of Pink and Mauve cards at weekly tests, I would get a gilt card, 20 upon 20, about three times out of four. Didi joined Loreto House, Middleton Row, and was doing fine.

In the beginning I felt much as I suppose a wild elephant feels when he is trapped in the *Kheda* (a stockade, an annual feature in the Tracts when we were children). In the first week or two I had a fight with the class bully, Mosquito. I was about as well versed in the science of fisticuffs as a monk is in the art of sex but Mosquito tried to humiliate me in front of my friends. He said something insulting and I retorted with something equally uncomplimentary. He was waiting for an excuse to pummel me into submission. He said, "come on" and struck the pose of a boxer. I said nothing and waited. He sailed in and "socked" me on the jaw. I lost my temper. Everything happened rather fast. I was on his chest and banging his head on the floor when I was torn away by two or three of our classmates. Mosquito never troubled me again. I might sound like the strong, silent type – I was not. I was much like everybody else – an extrovert – but I never could stand being bullied and never consciously bullied anyone myself.

A few weeks after my brother was born my parents returned to Rangamati. So as to provide some continuity in our studies Didi and I were put in the care of Dadu, my grandfather and my uncle Sunit. The former practiced at the Calcutta High Court and the latter worked in the Calcutta Corporation. Their groundfloor flat was situated at 80A Theatre Road off Park Street. Our tutor Ratish Majumder managed to find himself accommodation in a loft above a garage close by. Dadu (Saral Sen) and Baramama (Sunit) looked after us with much affection. Apart from the threat of imminent Japnese invasion, it was the time of the Bengal famine and we saw, with sadness, long lines of people on the streets begging. I came down with chicken pox. The old wives' tale that once someone gets measles and chicken pox one is immune from another bout is not based on fact because I contracted these ailments twice. For safety's sake Didi was shifted to Na-Didima's house. She was one of Dadu's sisters, married to Prof. Mahalanobis, one of whose three sons was also a professor. The three brothers were all tall and were called Babul, Kabul and Dadul – and were fondly avuncular, and the elderly couple, whenever I met them, were amusing and kindly. My mother's father, Dadu, who used to tell us stories about Tantia Tope, a folk hero and nationalist, died in December 1943, shortly after Didi and I had returned to Rangamati.

The following year, in March 1944, I was admitted to Victoria School, Kurseong as a boarder, and Didi in St. Helen's Convent, up, up and away in the Himalayan foothills. In these hills the climate is salubrious and along with other comparatively fair complexioned youngsters I used to have pink cheeks soon after we

arrived at school every March. However, after descending to the plains in late November the pink in the cheeks would slowly begin to fade. After going up to the Darjeeling hills I never once got an attack of malarial fever, which used to be almost a regular feature of life. In those days there was no air service between Chittagong and Calcutta nor to Baghdogra for Darjeeling. One took the narrow gauge train from Chittagong to Chandpur, a small town beside the Brahmaputra River, called the Padma in East Bengal. Then one boarded the paddle steamer where they served delicious Hilsa fish, curried as well as fried. The boat went up to Goalanda in Faridpur district, from where one took the train again to Calcutta.

Usually an uncle escorted us on our biannual journeys to and from school. In 1949 and 1950 I was big enough to travel alone, and Didi had joined college in Calcutta. At the beginning and end of each winter vacation Didi and I stayed a few days at our maternal grandmother's house on Gariahat road, Ballygunje. We would go to the Lighthouse or the Metro cinema to see a movie or two, which we called flic and in the vernacular "bioscope". We would also visit the Newmarket and call on relatives. Then, we took the overnight broad gauge train to Siliguri, from where either by car or by the slow moving Toy Train one wound up the hills from Siliguri to Kurseong, in four and a half hours. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, commonly known as the Toy Train, ran on rails that were laid at about two feet apart. Sometimes one or two Nepali assistants perched outside the locomotive and strew sand on the rails to make them less slippery. The size of the locomotive and the bogies were correspondingly small, and at its fastest the train did about 15 miles an hour. After reaching Kurseong, which in Nepali means Happy Valley, and is 4864 feet high, one still has eighteen miles to go and comes across three stations, Tung, Sonada and Ghoom, before descending to Darjeeling. From Siliguri 'Darj' is at a distance of about 80 km and is situated on an elevation of a little over 6000 feet above sealevel. The Indians call it Durjay Lingam, meaning Shiva's Phallus. In Tibetan Darjeeling is named after 'Dorje' and 'Ling' means place, so place of the Thunderbolt.

The highest point is at Ghoom, over 7000 feet high. There is an ancient Tibetan Buddhist monastery, hardly two hundred metres from the station that everybody who came to Ghoom visited. While at Darjeeling, one is pervaded by the imposing presence of the snowy mountain range, the majestic Kanchenjunga, with the detached little Pandu to the right. From personal experience I can vouch that a really majestic view of the whole massif is obtained from the lower flat of Victoria School by moonlight. One occasionally also caught a glimpse of Mount Everest but it did not look half as magnificent as Kanchenjunga. Visitors did not leave without a view of the sunrise over Tiger Hills and without savouring the renowned Darjeeling tea – Lobsang Suchang or Flowery Orange Pekoe or other blends of heady flavours. On a visit in the mid-1940s with my parents, I recall a trip to the Botanical Gardens below on my first ride in a Dandy, a large rickshaw pulled by burly Bhutias with braided hair under broad brimmed felt hats.

Darjeeling, known as the city of bells many years ago because of the profusion of monasteries, originally belonged to Tibet, then to Sikkim. The English East India Company deprived the King of Sikkim of this beautiful region through an unequal treaty in 1835. Hazel Innes Craig in her book "Under the Old School Topee" writes, "In 1835, after a period of settling internal strife between Nepal and Sikkim, the British were given a strip of hill territory by the aged Rajah of Sikkim which included the villages of Darjeeling and Kurseong 'as a mark of friendship' for the Governor General (Lord William Bentinck) for the establishment of a sanitarium for the invalid servants of the East India Company. In return for this favour the Rajah received an allowance of Rs. 3,000 subsequently revised to Rs. 6,000 per annum." A slightly variant version says that Darjeeling was developed as a health resort by the East India Company with the approval of the King of Sikkim and was built as a health resort in 1839. Later the English got Sikkim to cede the territory on the basis of an unequal treaty. The Sikkimese had already been enervated by conflict with King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Nepal for some time. The majority in these hills is Nepali, with the Sikkimese Lepcha and the Bhutias or Drupkas as the next most populous groups. In 1941, the Nepalese speaking population was 86.8%. Of course, many Bhutias and Lepchas also speak Nepali.

In Kurseong, a wealthy Marwari family, the Goenkas, owned the biggest general store in town situated at the railway station named after Goenka's son Chand. They also owned the only Cinema House, The Plaza, which stood on the Hill Cart Road. Cinema tickets started with four annas, a quarter of a rupee, and first class was one rupee. A packet of glass toffee of which we youngsters were inordinately fond also cost four annas. The toffee was brittle but at times gooey and was then called "Stickjaw." The confection or concoction consisted of "gur" (molasses), water and condensed milk, occasionally adorned with a few scraps of peanut. Most of the railway restaurants in Bengal belonged to another businessman, a Parsi called Sohrabjee.

Less than a hundred yards from the Kurseong railway station was a set of stables with ponies for anyone who cared to hire them for a ride on an hourly basis from tough looking local hillwomen with plaited hair in long thick dusky robes called *chubas*. The three mile climb to Victoria and its sister school Dowhill was steep and one could go up in a groaning taxi or on a pony, while the heavy steel trunks would be carried by sturdy Nepali women with head straps. Near the station in the middle of the tea bushes a stone Buddha sat on a pedestal on a prominent peak called Eagle's Crag. From Siliguri to Darjeeling there is one main road called the Hill Cart Road. Although Darjeeling District was a part of Bengal, and after partition West Bengal, very few Bengalis lived in these hills. This was tea country and had some prestigious English medium boarding schools that were modelled on Eton and Harrow, and Rugby of "Tom Brown's schooldays."

Here too, in the first few days, I had to fight in order not to be humbled into a sycophant of the class bully, Ralph Tucker. At tea he deliberately spilt some tea from my cup and refused to say "sorry". The fact that I asked for an apology (prompted by

Tucker's enemies) was a *casus belli* enough. He challenged me to "have it out." Honour, and face was involved. I accepted. My friends gave me moral support and advice on the art of warfare. We ventured forth to the arena reserved for these duels – the triangle of turf outside the "bogs" (lavatory). Seconds were appointed and towels sneaked out of the dormitory. When he smacked me hard enough on the nose I saw red. I am rather of an equable temperament and from childhood cheerful, but when I lost my temper I tended to emulate the Bull under which sign of the Zodiac I was born. I charged. The upshot was as was to be expected for both, bruises and black eyes. Tucker left me alone after that and there was no hard feelings on either side. If Richard II hadn't thrown the gauntlet down at the lists at Coventry and had instead permitted Bolingbroke and Mowbray to settle their score he would perhaps have avoided being deposed. The moral of the story is – if two people want to slug it out it is often better to let them do so than to drive the antagonism underground to simmer and later to burst forth unchecked.

My school – Victoria, along with the sister school, Dowhill, located about a quarter mile away, (Didi attended St. Helen's) was established in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. The school stood at an elevation above 6,000 feet. These two schools were government financed and were run along the English public school lines. In Darjeeling, St. Paul's was the pioneer school established in 1863, followed by the Jesuit School St. Joseph's in 1888 and the American Methodist Missionary Mount Hermon School shortly thereafter.

In our time Victoria was amongst the best hill schools in India. There were less than ten percent non-Christians in the school to which category I, as a Buddhist, belonged. And this excused me from attending church services. At church, the girls from Dowhill came every Sunday and letters to and from girl friends were exchanged through the courtesy of the collection bag. I sent my letters to my girlfriend through Abdul Ghafur, a bearded tuckman who carried goodies such as patties, nunkatais, jamrolls et al in a tin box on his head and stood around a bend on the road to Forest School nearby. I was thereby infringing two rules at the same time, for we were not supposed to buy eatables from the tuckman from town but from our own tuckshop, which opened on weekends and did not allow you to buy on tick. The third broken rule was my going out of the school premises without permission. As Ghafur was not allowed in I had to go out in order for supply and demand to meet.

I was interested in almost all the extra–curricular activities and was a Cub and then a Scout, and until I broke my arm in 1947, I even turned out to be a reasonably good boxer. (Many years later I became the Commissioner of Scouts in the Hill Tracts but the really good scout was the Hill Tracts Troop leader, Rev. F.W. Smith, the Baptist Mission head at Rangamati.) In the course of my seven years at the school I won a number of prizes, including one or two for debating. In 1949 and 1950, I represented the school at cricket, football and hockey but in 1949 lost the Athletic Championship by one point. The following year, however, I won it easily. I was given the lead roles in the annual school drama twice and was generally liked – even as a Prefect. I won essay prizes too, but in the academic class prizes I only won

"Pickwick Papers" in 1947 for "application." This was given to me purely on the ground that though I was in hospital for two months, at the final examination I stood second or third in class. I am not so sure I merited it.

We shared not only the church with our sister school but the hospital as well. My stay in hospital in 1947 was the result of a compound fracture in my left arm with both the radius and ulna broken. At Physical Training period the master, the same choleric, red-faced Jock Hill that supervised carpentry (the actual carpentry expert was called John Chinaman) was late – perhaps playing billiards during an extended coffee break and we were horsing around in the Gymnasium. From the "horse" I leapt into the air in the direction of the iron bars that supported the roof with the intention of swinging there like Tarzan or one of his apes. My fingertips brushed the iron bar but could not grab hold of it. I twisted and twirled through space backward and landed on my hand. There was a crack as the radius and ulna both snapped and punctured the forearm. Jock Hill was informed and he rushed around, much agitated. My classmates enjoyed the *tamasha* (to do) and the outing to hospital carrying me on a stretcher. Because the first time workmanship of the bone setter was not all that good, they knocked me out with chloroform once again, a month or so later, at the same Tuberculosis Sanitarium, halfway between school and the railway station because they had better facilities than at the school hospital. Doctor Guha was a tuberculosis expert, not a bonesetter.

The stretch in hospital was not only an unmitigated holiday – I did occasionally read some text books – but a pleasant one at that, for I am not averse to female company. My English master Terence Bennet used to say I was a Ladies' Man. The image of one, to me, was rather like that of Philip Sevilla whose part I subsequently played in the school drama called "Ten Minute Alibi." And as such none too flattering. Sevilla was a suave Spaniard who used his charm to ensnare women and then gain monetary advantages, a sort of sophisticated white slave trader. In real life I found that indulging in feminine society though pleasurable is far from being a gainful occupation. A few years earlier, at junior school another English master Charles A. Bloud, better known as Carlos, with a wry sense of humour would ask us to write an essay. When someone asked in which particular copybook, he would reply, "Write it on the hairs of your chest, lad, on the hairs of your chest." One of his comments on an essay of mine was: "Too flowery." I always scored high marks in English. I wish I could say the same of all the other subjects.

I was hopeless at carpentry. When I used the jackplane on a piece of wood, the farther end always became much thinner than the nearer end, try as I might. This resulted in the irascible, red-faced drill cum carpentry master Jock Hill's calling me a blockhead and tapping me none too gently on the head with my work of art. This happened a year or so before I broke my arm. For this I disliked him intensely. I had to continue with carpentry for three years, when I could have studied something else instead, one of the drawbacks of regimentation in many educational institutions, especially then. He did not hit me again but nevertheless my skill in carpentry never blossomed forth, neither in the spring nor in the autumn of my life.

I was the captain of Mallory House. The other two houses were also named after the Everest climbers Irvine, and Kellas, the doctor. On 8 June 1924, George Leigh Mallory and his "inexperienced 22 year old engineering student companion" Andrew Irvine disappeared just 600 feet from the summit. Recent research is trying to determine if, in fact, they had actually met with an accident after and not before reaching the summit. It was Mallory who when asked why he liked to climb a mountain, gave a reply that is quoted even today. He said, "Because it is there." At school we had Mallory's compass, a treasured memento that was gifted by Mallory's mother. Mallory House colour was yellow, Irvine red and Kellas blue. The school colours were red, yellow and blue (all the primary colours) but at games it was red, as was St. Paul's, whereas the Catholic Schools like St. Joseph's, and Goethal's colour was blue. Our School motto was "Quo lux ducit" (where the light leads).

In my last year, I was permitted to drop Science and Art and I took up instead Higher Bengali because one could answer questions on the text in English; Hygiene and Physiology, which bored me, and Scripture which was stimulating. Three altogether new subjects at the Senior Cambridge level for one who is by nature not studious except in that which interests him, was foolhardy. And as I was a school prefect and in charge of a dormitory of third standard boys I skipped evening study altogether. Instead, I enjoyed the story-telling sessions of the youngsters by rote in the dormitory, or either read novels or wrote letters to the current girlfriend. The result was, honors in English, a simple pass in Scripture, a simple rejected in Hygiene and Physiology, and credits in all the rest, including Hindi and Higher Bengali. I did well enough to gain admission to the Inns of Court in London (Lincoln's Inn), to study for the bar, which was what my father wanted and which I had nothing against. I was by nature unambitious and didn't believe in too many Holy Cows and Sacred Bulls but I loved my father too much to disappoint him. He had told me I had to have a minimum of six credits including Mathematics and English. As I got more than that, he was pleased. If all went well in three years' time – when I was twenty – I'd be a barrister-at-law. So far as my father was concerned, after that I only had to wait to succeed him.

Right through childhood father had been training me for my responsibility. He helped me in understanding the basic problems of the Tracts, in knowing the various political and social leaders, their propensities and predilections, and in learning to deal with people of all classes. In the process one absorbed the "dones" and "not dones" according to the unwritten codes, traditions and usages. There was no formal religious training though we heard lots of sermons and discourses from monks. We had extended discussions with Buddhist monks on philosophy and were encouraged to be inquisitive and even argumentative though of course always respectful. Besides these, there were the traditional ceremonies and rituals and feasts, and of course tours to the interior of the Tracts to meet the people and find out their problems.

Lord Linlithgow, who became Viceroy and Governor General in April 1936, had passed an order with regard to warrant of precedence. It said the Chakma and

Bohmong will, inter se, in neutral territory, take precedence according to their date of installation. The three chiefs would rank above personal title holders of Raja (or Nawab) but below the hereditary Raja, thereby denying the Chakma Raja his hereditary and historical precedence and position. The others were also hereditary rulers even if of less antiquity. The idea of investing the Chakma Raja with the title was to deny by implication his hereditary title and at the same time raise the status of the Bohmong who had always ranked after the Chakma. The British indulged in similar mischief in regulating inter se precedence vis a vis Tripura, the first recorded Native state in India and the smaller Coochbehar, and in the case of certain other native princes. These were merely to ensure a state of internecine rivalry between them so they would not worry too much about forging a unified front against the British Raj. These were the views of grandfather that father too held and passed on to me.

Clement Attlee appointed the Cabinet Mission under the 80-year-old Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, who despite his age came on the visit to India. The other members were Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty. They arrived in India on 23 March 1946, and devised the ABC or 3 Group Federation Plan of a United India that envisaged a union of British India and the Native States with the subjects of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications and the power to raise the necessary finances. There would be three groups of provinces. Group A would comprise the 6 Hindu majority provinces, Group B the provinces of the Punjab, North West Frontier, Sindh and Balochistan, and Group C the provinces of Bengal and Assam. The provinces and the states would be vested with all residuary powers save the union subjects. Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah accepted. And so did the Congress, only to back out later. The leaders of the Hill Tracts were happy with this ABC formulation, better known as the Cabinet Mission Plan.

CHAPTER XVI

Quaid-i-Azam's Visit

On his first and only visit to Chittagong, the Quaid-i-Azam invited the Chiefs to meet him. The lady Chief Nanoomah not being well signed the joint memorial to be presented to the Governor General but did not come to Chittagong. The Chakma Raja and the Bohmong, in their formal Durbar dress, met the Quaid at the Chittagong airport on 25 March 1948. The interview went off pleasantly and when it was time to present the memorial, the Quaid-i-Azam asked the Bohmong to hand it over to him. However, the Bohmong, being conscious of the momentous nature of the occasion said, "If Your Excellency permits I prefer to stand and read it out." He then stood up and read the address. Jinnah assured the Chiefs that they would be looked after and the safeguards of the hillpeople and the special status of the Hill Tracts would be maintained. The address, which is reproduced below may be noted also for the fact that more than once the Hill Tracts is referred to as "our country". Obviously the use of the word "country" in this context was to emphasize not its political existence as a sovereign country, which it was not, but to emphasize its special entity and identity.

To

His Excellency the Quaid-i-Azam M.A. Jinnah,
Governor-General of the Pakistan Dominion.

1. We, the three Chiefs of the Chittagong Hill Tracts feel highly honoured that we have the privilege today to pay our homage to the Supreme Head of the Dominion in which God has ordained us to be included. We offer Your Excellency our loyalty and devotion and we are comforted to know that we have the interest and protection of the great State you represent.

2. We are no less grateful to the Government of East Bengal for having recognized and assured us of the maintenance of our prestige and privileges in the same traditional manner in which we have enjoyed them in the past. Our whole Excluded Area, Chittagong Hill Tracts, is fully covered by the territories of the three Chiefs viz., Chakma Circle 2499 sq. miles, Bohmong Circle 1935 sq. miles and the Mong Circle 704 sq. miles in total 5138 sq. miles (inclusive of about 1400 sq. miles of Govt. Forest Reserves) consisting of several hill tribes, Chakmas, Moghs, Tipperas, Mros, Lushais, Khumis, Khyangs, Chaks and a few number of plainspeople.

3. We are anxious to preserve our identity and country as a separate entity under the aegis of the Pakistan Dominion.

4. Your Excellency will appreciate our apprehension with regard to merging our simple people into the body politic of a far more advanced country like that of

plains districts and our fears with regard to becoming involved in the complexities of the laws and regulations of regulated districts which would be quite unsuited to our simple social structure and needs, exposing us to exploitation which we could not withstand.

5. Owing to the fact that we are still a simple and credulous people we view with great apprehension our inclusion as an ordinary regulated District. We particularly dread exploitation in business by plainsmen and the imposition of the Bengal Tenancy Act with its intricate points of law and complex system of tenure as also the consequential result of the prohibition of Jum cultivation, which would spell disaster and ruin for a large number of our people. Apart from this, our people being quite ignorant of such system which involve "Khata", "On-Demand" payments and "Hundi" transactions would fall into variety of traps which temptation and allurement would place before them with the result that they would pledge away all they possessed and get little or nothing in return.

6. We, therefore, beg Your Excellency most respectfully to permit us, to develop on our own traditional lines and as a separate country, till we can stand on our own legs, by the development of self sufficiency, under the strong protection and benign help of the State. On the attainment of such a position of strength and culture, we would offer ourselves as one whole, to stand as a bastion of the State on this far Eastern border, to serve it loyally and unremittingly, as its sentinels of the Frontier, against any external aggression.

We subscribe ourselves,
Most devotedly and loyally,

Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-
(Kyaw Jaw San)	(Raja Nalinaksha Roy)	(Nanoomah)
Bohmong	Chakma Chief	Mong Chief

Dated, Chittagong,
The 25th March, 1948.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(a) The area of the Hill Tracts is clearly stated as 5138 square miles. Some of the indigenous people are named and the Bengalis are "a few number of plainspeople."

(b) The Hill Tracts "our whole Excluded Area is fully covered by the territories of the three Chiefs."

(c) We are anxious to preserve our identity and country as a separate entity.

(d) The desire to be permitted "to develop on our own traditional lines and as a separate country."

CHAPTER XVII

Arati

One evening during the *Punyah* in December 1949, after a round of the crowded *mela* grounds, I entered my father's study for some reason. Three girls were chatting quietly around the desk. Two were cousins, but the third girl I had never seen before. She was exquisitely beautiful with a pale golden complexion, luxuriant black hair cascading down to below her very slender waist. Her light brown eyes were large and her gaze forthright and unafraid, yet gently shy. Her name was Arati. After dinner, around midnight, I took the three girls to the *jatra* show. It was a five-act mythical play based on ancient Indo-Aryan traditions called the Puranas. I made Arati sit next to me. She spoke little but was aware and attentive yet aloof, with a becoming reserve that gave her poise beyond her years. I was then a little over 16 and Arati 14. For me it was love at first sight, discounting the numerous crushes I had had from the age of five.

Arati was the granddaughter of Chandra Mohan Dewan, the head of the Barua Goza, one of the major septs of the Chakmas, some of whom belonged to the Rajparaliya group. The present Raj family belongs to the Wangza Sept. Before that, the Rajas came from the Mulima Goza for a period, and still earlier there were Barua Goza kings, two notable examples being Bura Barua and Shatua. Arati's father Nibaran was the eldest son and successor of Chandra Mohan. However, having had the benefit of a college education Nibaran was induced to join government service by G.L. Hyde, the longest serving deputy commissioner with more than 12 years in the Tracts. He was inducted into the separate Hill Tracts police force after receiving training at the Police Training College at Sardah in north Bengal. When I met Arati, he was posted at Rangamati and was in charge of the headquarters police station known as Kotwali Thana. His house was located at the northern end of the parade ground, situated on the neck of peninsular Rangamati, and overlooking the river on both the east and west. To the north extended the higher grounds of Upper Rangamati. All around the field was a row of stately old mahogany trees. This ground was where athletic sports, football matches and government functions like ceremonial parades were held. Our annual three month school vacation was from December to March but I wished it were during the football season. I could then have played football and seen Arati more frequently.

A few days after the *Punyah* I went for a bicycle ride across the river, and when near her house, I could not stave off the compulsion within. I got off the bicycle and deciding that I needed a glass of water, entered the compound. To Arati's mother the excuse would certainly appear lame, but I could think up no better ostensible reason. Screwing up courage, and yet blushing with embarrassment, I went in. Arati's father was away at work, and her mother received me pleasantly enough. She went into the kitchen to make some tea. She was a cousin of my father's though I

did not know it then. Arati's younger brothers and sisters would wander in and out of the room. She later told me that I used to talk a great deal, though I cannot recall anything we had talked about. I also met Arati's grandmothers there once, when they came on a visit. Her paternal and maternal grandmothers were sisters and her parents were first cousins. Among the Chakmas, one can marry one's mother's sister's son or daughter as well as that of one's father's sister's. The children of brothers however cannot marry, nor their offspring in the male line for five generations.

We neither touched hands nor expressed endearments, yet both of us were in love. We wrote a great many letters, through the courtesy of my cousin Ratna as the messenger. On one occasion, by sheer coincidence, we found ourselves in separate cabins of a motor launch going to Chittagong. There was no motorable road from Rangamati to Chittagong then. Two motor launches plied daily either way. Downstream, with stops, it took about ten hours to do the sixtyfour miles to Chittagong. (In Lewin's days it was thought to be 67 miles. A *firti*, oxbow lake, like the one at Magban perhaps allowed the river to shorten itself). Upriver was more uncertain due to sandbars, but near Chittagong itself Kodala in the dry season was hazardous. If the launch got stuck on one of these *chars* one first tried to "roll" out of it. All the passengers would scurry from port to starboard and back again while the *sarang*, the captain of the craft, would yell "left" and "right" in the Chittagonian dialect. If this failed one waited for the high tide – whose effects, however, got fainter as one travelled up the Karnafuli.

Arati was with her grandparents and a girl cousin. My cousin Chiranjib (Babluda), Kakku's eldest son, and I were travelling to Chittagong too, to see an exhibition being held there and to meet my mother's sister, Sadhona Bose. She had been invited from Calcutta by N.M. Khan, the Commissioner Chittagong Division on behalf of the Government of East Pakistan, to give a week's dance performances at the Exhibition, and was staying at our town house, Rajapur. A year or so earlier, on a visit, she had agreed to give a dance performance in aid of the proposed school to be named after my father's mother Rani Dayamayee. It was staged at the Nachkhana of the Rajbari and the tickets were all sold out, days before the performance. (After the dam the school continues on our lands in new Rangamati.)

I persuaded Chiranjib, who was bashful, especially where girls were concerned, to come with me to the other cabin. He was particularly shy of Arati's cousin as there was some talk of a possibility of their getting married – parents often receive oblique matrimonial offers for their children through mutual friends or relatives. We played cards and chatted, and this unexpected pleasure made the occasion the most memorable motor launch trip of my life. Many years later I undertook the only other trip on watercraft that was unforgettable. In October 1975, I was on the Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth 2 for five days, criuising from New York to Southamton, before the ship was transformed to a troop carrier for the Falklands war in 1982, which I observed from Buenos Aires. I enjoyed the relaxed leisure so much that I refused the Captain's invitation to dinner, with thanks. I had no desire to tog up and sit up in formal company.

At the launch terminal at Chittagong, we could not muster any of the scarce cloth-topped Model T Fords that plied as taxicabs, so we hired two or three hackney carriages. Seated beside Arati, I enjoyed the ride to the Hill Students' Lodge at Jamal Khan Road, Nandan Kanan where they were staying. I stayed on for a cup of tea. Hillpeople visiting Chittagong stayed either at the Lodge or at the inexpensive Pice Hotel. A pice was the smallest monetary unit. 4 paisas (pice) equalled one anna, 16 annas one rupee. Though not in use there was the pie – 12 to one anna. My aunt Bijanbala, (Barapishi) born at the tail end of Queen Victoria's reign told me that they had used cowrie shells as money too. Cowries were legal tender well into the earlier decades of the 20th Century, especially in the rural areas of British India.

Arati and I met at the Exhibition grounds once or twice, always in company, and I invited her and her relatives to the cinema once. During the film, I placed my hand on hers, but she quickly withdrew hers. After some time I again held her hand, and this time she let me hold it for about a minute. This was the only familiarity that passed between us, until years later, after we were engaged, when I carried her across a stream at Chandraghona, and we exchanged a chaste kiss for the first time. At the time of the visit to the Chittagong exhibition, Arati had just had her fifteenth birthday, on 21 February 1950.

Even though she was so young, and there are no child marriages among the Chakmas (the exception being confined to one or two in our family), offers had been coming in for some time for Arati. Usually girls marry when they are at their fifteenth, seventeenth or nineteenth year, though but rarely at the twentyfirst, because normally they are married before they reach that age. Amongst the educated, seventeen and nineteen were more in vogue, but Arati being from one of the best families, and having the additional advantage of being a very good looking girl, the offers kept pouring in. Word had got around that I was interested in Arati. Most people, however, felt that nothing would come of it because my parents would probably prefer that I marry from one of the Indian princely families. Some were of the view that since I was due to go to England in a year or two, it was likely that I might marry an English girl of my choice while there. In any case they thought that a Chakma girl was unlikely for me. On my part, I was deeply in love with Arati, but had sense enough to realize that I was too young for marriage then.

I was afraid of losing her, yet not in a position to do anything about it. One afternoon, while at her place, I told Arati that she should wait for my return from England. I would marry her then. She smiled. "You will forget me long before that," she said. I protested with vehemence. "In any case my parents won't keep me until then," she added, her eyes sad as she turned her face away and quietly wiped away her tears. I assured her that I wanted to marry her and would marry her, but after I returned from England. She kept silent.

As my frequent visits were commented upon and the word spread, Arati's mother naturally became concerned for her daughter's reputation. One day, very tactfully, she told my cousin Ratna that my visits to their house was hurting Arati's

reputation and so I should try to understand and desist. The only answer was a formal engagement, but I felt that to ask father to have us engaged was too ludicrous. I was only sixteen then. I was also hurt at Arati's lack of confidence in me and in my promise to marry her on return from England. In retrospect, on the question as to whether I would have married her on my return it is difficult to conjecture even now. I may have, I may not have. Perhaps I should have asked father to get us engaged after all. I wrote to Arati, but she wrote back to say that though she loved me and would never love any other man, her sense of honour and duty to her parents left her no options. Even though it broke her heart, it was better that we did not communicate or see each other.

March arrived, my vacation ended. I went back to my boarding school, Victoria. At school, ever since I was thirteen or fourteen, I had girlfriends on an average of one every year. My last year at school was no exception. At school "socials" we danced cheek to cheek and exchanged love letters, laughed and joked, but I never felt love for any of them in the way I did for Arati, either before or after meeting her. These loves were of a different and ephemeral nature, more like flirtatious good fellowship. While they were invigorating, their termination never caused a sense of devastation, as I experienced when I lost Arati.

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CHAPTER XVIII

Two Royal Visits

In 1948 or so, the provincial government had extended the Agricultural Income Tax to the Tracts. We were taxed heavily on the basis of diabolically assessed supposed income derived from the sale of straw (which no one did in the Hill Tracts) and an imaginary astronomical production of paddy and other crops exceeding the actual by about 300%. It was an unjust imposition that vexed father and other landowners, mainly Chakmas, a great deal. This tax impoverished many families, reducing some to absolute penury. Father's hypertension was a by-product of the Agricultural Income Tax that killed him within two or three years of its imposition. The anomalous situation was that the Income Tax Act did not apply to the indigenous hillmen, but the Agricultural Income Tax did. Strangely enough, this inequitous and pernicious tax was not introduced in West Pakistan for many years, despite the fact that the land holdings in the west were larger, and the majority of the landholders were decidedly more affluent than their East Pakistani brethren. (An amendment was brought about in the Punjab Assembly at the end of May 2003. The Daily "Times" of May 29, 2003 reports as under.

PA adopts agriculture income tax amendment bill

(Lahore - Staff Report) In the absence of opposition, the Punjab Assembly on Wednesday adopted the Punjab Agricultural Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2003, ruling out the amendments submitted by opposition members.

According to the bill, the people with agricultural land of 12.5 acres or less are exempt from land tax. Those with land of more then 12.5 acres but not exceeding 25 acres will pay tax at Rs. 150 per acre per year. Those with more than 25 acres of land will pay tax at Rs. 250 per acre per year. This will apply from July 1.

The government also made an addition to Section 3-A in the Punjab Agricultural Income Tax Act 1997, according to which "any person liable to pay tax under the act, transferring his land or interest therein on or after the first day of July 2003 in favour of his wife or any of his heir under the age of eighteen years, shall continue to be liable for payment of the tax as if such transfer had not taken place. The person would be liable for the payment of the tax in respect of the land or interest therein transferred to any of his heirs under the age of eighteen years, shall cease when the heir attains the age of eighteen years. For the purpose of determining whether or not a transferee is

an heir within the meaning of the said section, succession to the propoerty of the owner shall be deemed to have opened at the time of the transfer."

In March 1950, I was in our Chittagong House, Rajapur on my way back to school after the winter vacations, and attending to my sartorial needs, for this was the nearest town with its Savile Row and local bespoke tailors. Bijoybabu, our Nazir, (In charge of household matters) suddenly arrived with my durbar dress and father's sword and handed me his letter. I was to represent him and be presented to the visiting Shah-in-Shah of Iran, as father was not feeling too well, having developed high blood pressure. The following day the Deputy Commissioner of the Hill Tracts, Major Lancelot H. Niblett came to Rajapur and together with him I proceeded to the Circuit House. I was feeling rather self-conscious in regalia but was heartened to find the other two Chiefs in durbar dress too. However, as we were being briefed before presentation a note of discord made itself manifest. The Lady Mong Chief Nanoomah, who was installed in 1929, and who preferred to be addressed as the Mong Raja and not Rani or Rajkumari, did not relish the idea of my taking precedence over her. Her objection was not based on my being a sixteen-year old schoolboy, nor on her being my great aunt by marriage, points irrelevant in matters of protocol. Her stand was on the fact that I was not the Chakma Raja but his representative, whereas she was the Queen Regnant of her territory, the Mong Circle.

The Protocol Officer, however, very politely demurred saying he was but a humble civil servant, and orders were orders. He was obviously going by the Linlithgow formulation wherein it says that on neutral territory the Mong will always rank third. The official was unable or unwilling to see the finer distinctions between the real and the representative. The dignified lady was a great personality and after her initial protest resiled from her stand. The Shah of Iran shook hands and smiled as we were presented (to royalty one is presented, to others introduced) but I do not recall if there was any exchange of pleasantries. He was a handsome man in a grey blue Air Force uniform. I met him again in his Palace at Tehran more than twenty years later and we talked about this visit.

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In February 1961, I was presented to Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, in the premises of the same Circuit House, Chittagong. This time all the three Chiefs were new. Though the youngest in age I outranked them even by usual protocol, for I was the seniormost having succeeded to the gadi before the other two. A little before Her Majesty arrived, the Divisional Commissioner, an Englishman named David Khaled Power said, "I will present you simply as Raja Tridiv Roy. Is that all right?" I said, "yes" and he showed us our places. We were to be the first to be presented to Her Majesty as she entered the ceremonial grounds on the lawns of

the imposing Circuit House. The Deputy Commissioner was placed after the three Chiefs. Just as the Queen arrived this gentleman, H.D. Chowdhury, hopped out of his place and stood to my right. I saw the other two Chiefs exchange a swift glance. Her Majesty shook hands and asked how far away I lived and one or two other polite questions. Prince Philip enquired if I kept myself pretty busy, I recall. Our Ranis, one each, were also presented. The last Bohmong had seven Ranis though the present one had only two. The three Ranis were ethnically all Chakmas but were turned out in their national dresses adding a touch of colour and distinction to the occasion. The Queen smilingly exchanged a few words with them.

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Queen Elizabeth II - Visit to Chittagong 1961 (Raja Tridiv Roy receiving Her Majesty at Chittagong Circuit House)

CHAPTER XIX

A Calcutta marriage .... And Bhagat Singh

Pradip Sen, mother's youngest brother was getting married – hence the gathering of the clan in Calcutta in December 1950. For the first time I met *Mashi*, my mother's recently widowed youngest sister Nilina, a woman of great charm and beauty who later came to be known as Naina Devi for her classical songs, especially Thumri, and her two daughters Nilika 15 and Rena 14, better known as June and Billy, both thoroughly unspoilt and full of joie de vivre. Mashi's 12 year old son Ratanjit (Reggy) did not come and her five-year old younger son Karanjit (Kenny) was the youngest in their party, and the oldest was Mashi's maternal uncle-in-law whom everyone called Mama Singh. He was jolly and somewhat like Falstaff in that he also had a rotund and expansive midriff. He was clean-shaven and had also dispensed with the turban and some of the four Ks. The orthodox Sikh is enjoined to use Kesh, Kirpan, Kara and Kachcha, which translated means long hair, a dagger, an iron bracelet and underpants. Mama Singh, who was not an orthodox Sikh, used the bracelet and also presumably underpants.

Uncle Pradip's marriage went off with a bang, with a reception at the Lake Club and all the trappings before and after. He was a handsome man, anglicized yet gentle and sober and not the imitative brash type of Indian who is often a parody of the Englishman. Pradip, a recently qualified Marine Engineer, was quite a poet and had won an award or two for poetry. While he was getting ready in his wedding attire, he took me aside. "Do you think I can make Alo happy?" he asked. He expected an answer so I gave him the one he expected. He had two shiny drops at the corner of his eyes. "Alo" means light and "Pradip" means lamp, so namewise they were suited.

Alo was a young Bengali lady of Calcutta, daughter of Colonel De. She was a product of Loreto House (Middleton Row) and had a master's degree in English. Alo and Pradip had been cast in some play in a theatre group at the New Empire Theatre and one thing had led to another culminating in this marriage day. The bride was slim, with bright eyes and a warm smile. I danced with her at the Lake Club. June and Billy told me later that I was dancing too close and they had sent out frantic signals to me. But I was oblivious to any such messages. Dancing close just came naturally to me, as an extension of the dances at school. I don't feel comfortable holding my partner as though I am afraid of catching some germs from her. I told the girls that, but they giggled some more and we were all uproariously happy. In those days the dances where you gyrated like independent planets without touching each other had not come into vogue, except the Jitterbug but even here you went away and came close and touched hands.

Didima praised a Sadhu. I saw him at one of the receptions in this marriage milieu and had no way to discovering his remarkable qualities. He seemed a near normal person with near mad eyes. But I went to the crowded Kalighat temple and offered some flowers Didima insisted upon. The goddess Kali is said to prefer the red hibiscus flower and live sacrifices. Then I went to see a chubby Sadhu who, Didima said, was a palmist of A-1 rating. He lived in a mud house in the temple compound. There was an air of naturalness about him and he exuded placidity. He read my palm and predicted three events would shortly come to pass. I greatly doubted him, but all the three predictions came true within a year or two. Whether they were enlightened guesses or stellar foreshadowings or what-have-you, I have no way of gauging. The eternal mysteries of predetermination and cause and effect are fascinating because their workings are unfathomable, not the veracity of their existence. However, whether one chooses to believe in the three goddesses of Fate of Greek mythology or other charming variations, whereby one can exculpate oneself, is a matter of personal choice. In the Buddhist view one is responsible for one's acts and no one else.

Didima, like her *Beai* Raja Charanjit, used to go through spiritual phases that manifested themselves in goat slaughter and Tantricism one week, Buddhist detachment another, Zen the third, and some new version of a near Druid Cult the following. Raja Charanjit, Nilina Mashi's father-in-law, belonged to the Kapurthala Maharaja's family, another branch being the Patiala clan. The Kapurthala Maharaja had built himself a version of the Sun King's palace at Versailles, at his capital. Raja Charanjit Singh was one of the Indian leaders that had attended the Round Table Conference in London that started on 12 November 1930 and ended on 19 January 1931. At this first conference the Congress had abstained from attending. The Second Round Table Conference commenced on 7 September 1931, six months after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Gandhi attended as the sole representative of the Congress Party.

It was the time when Bhagat Singh the nationalist freedom fighter, aged 22, Shivram Rajguru and Sukh Dev were being tried for the assassination of the Assistant Superintendent of Police Saunders, aged 21, on 17 December 1928 by a Special Tribunal in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. Saunders had been mistaken for his superior, the Police Superintendent Scott, who had struck Lala Lajpat Rai as a consequence of which Lajpat Rai died on 17 November. All shades of politicians supported Bhagat Singh including Subhash Chandra Bose, Jinnah and Nehru. On 12 September 1929 Jinnah made an impresive speech in the Central Legislative Assembly of India in defence of a fair and open trial of the legendary terrorist Bhagat Singh. However, Gandhi was lukewarm, on the ground that Bhagat Singh and his accomplices had resorted to extreme violence, and he was the champion of the non-violent, non-cooperation movement. On 24 March 1931 Bhagat Singh was hanged in Lahore. His two accomplices met the same fate. They became national heroes in British India.

An article by Majid Sheikh that appeared in "Dawn" on 8 April 2002, sheds light on the goings on of ambitious men and of the jinxed house of Lehna Singh. It is titled "Bhagat Singh and the circle of blood". Here it is:

"There is one story about Lahore that is close to my heart and that is the story of Bhagat Singh, that great freedom fighter of Lahore and of this sub-continent. No amount of sectarian hatred can erase the memory of a man who walked tall in the streets of Lahore, and who was hanged in the now knocked down Central Jail.

"There was a strange story we had heard about Bhagat Singh when we were small children. It was said that his ghost roamed around in the Shah Jamal area and near the shrine of Baba Shah Jamal. Many even claimed having seen an image of the saint talking to Bhagat Singh promising him revenge for the great injustice that had been done to him. I had heard of the story from our cook, who used to visit the shrine of Shah Jamal. My father was a storyteller par excellence. He never admitted that this was true, no matter how hard I pestered him. He always left the door of doubt open with a 'maybe it's true, maybe not, you will have to wait for the truth to come out one day.'

"Not many people know that the area we know as Shadman and Shah Jamal was once known as Lehna Singh di Schaoni, or the military cantonment of Lehna Singh. This was the place where Sardar Lehna Singh, one of the three chieftains who ruled Lahore just before Maharajah Ranjit Singh forged his Punjab Empire to contain the spread of the British across the Sutlej. In the middle of this 'cantonment' was a huge house, just about where today exists the second roundabout coming from Jail Road. This is the roundabout nearest the shrine of Baba Shah Jamal, the sufi saint who lies buried just 200 yards from this point, and the reason the area is so called.

"The legend goes that the Khans of Kasur, who were in league with the British to topple the Lahore Durbar, sent an envoy to negotiate with a Sikh chief to conspire the murder of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. During the discussions things went wrong and the head of the envoy was chopped off and sent to Kasur. The treachery of the Pathan rulers of Kasur had met its match. It is said that a seer had then predicted that the ghost of the envoy would seek revenge at this very place, and that the circle of revenge would not be completed with one killing alone. Chilling stuff. But then subsequent events were to prove that this prediction was true, and many say the circle of treachery still lives on.

"The rule of the Sikhs gave way to the British, and the rulers of Kasur played their treacherous part all along. They had before them, through their mullahs, pestered the sufi saint Bulleh Shah, and had paid a heavy price for their bigotry. The house and cantonment of Lehna Singh was knocked down and in its place was built the largest jail in the Punjab, where long-term inmates, or death row servers, were imprisoned. At the place where the house of Lehna Singh was built came up the gallows, and here many a criminal and freedom fighter was hanged. The place of death continued to serve its purpose.

"In 1928, the struggle to free our land from British rule was picking up, and during a procession in Lahore, just opposite the Lahore Museum, a well-known freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai was hit on the head during a police lathi-charge,

resulting in his death. This sent a wave of anger all over the sub-continent and a young 21-year old revolutionary by the name of Bhagat Singh took it upon himself to seek revenge. On November 17, 1928, he positioned himself on the first floor window of the New Hostel of the Government College, and from there fired on what he thought was Scott, a police official. Instead, he had shot dead the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Lahore, Saunders. Bhagat Singh ran away to Calcutta, and then returned to Agra, where he allegedly set up a bomb-making concern. He was arrested while throwing bombs on the Legislative Assembly that was passing the draconian Trade Disputes Bill. One account states that he gave himself up shouting that the British could never kill him, and that he was consigned to history and his blood would flow redder if he was killed.

"Bhagat Singh was tried and sentenced to hang on October 7, 1930. The British feared this young man so much that not a single magistrate could be found in the whole of India to sign his death warrants. In the end, they turned to Kasur, where a loyal magistrate by the name of Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Khan later to be known as Kasuri, agreed to sign the necessary papers and supervise the hanging. Fearless and shouting slogans for the freedom of the sub-continent, the Ravian Bhagat Singh (one account says he was a student of the National College) was hanged on March 23, 1931. (Date change in the East takes place at sunrise, in the West at midnight. For example, 4 at night of the 6th in the Eastern system, would be 4 am of the 7th in the Western system.) In the Lahore Central Jail at the place where once was the residence of Lehna Singh, a relative of Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Khan Kasuri was killed for betraying the cause of the Punjab. Old timers say that all over the land not a single hearth fire burned that day.

"Then comes an even stranger twist to this tale of blood. In 1975, in a now well-known assassination attempt on the son of Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Khan Kasuri, the old magistrate who had ordered the hanging of Bhagat Singh was himself shot dead at the very place were Lehna Singh's men beheaded a traitor from Kasur, where Bhagat Singh was hanged by the old magistrate. Revenge had come full circle and at the very same place. For that murder the famous Pakistani Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto was to hang, keeping the circle of blood flowing. Where will it all end, we do not know ... maybe some seer will appear and tell us."

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CHAPTER XX

The sports championship

After the wedding festivities in Calcutta in December 1950, I acted as guide on the journey to Rangamati. Chain-smoking Didima, who needed the King Stork brand of strong cigarette and who disdained the more refined brands like Dunhill and State Express 555, Mashi, my three cousins and Mama Singh were the guests. Ispahani's Orient Airways and the Indian Bharat Airways from Calcutta to Chittagong had streamlined travel quite a bit. The most adventurous bit was the 46-mile jeep journey from Chittagong. The road was still being constructed and at a diversion we had to cross a stream spanned by a single log. Didima, perhaps touching 70, was game but gave me the jitters when she jauntily stepped on the "bridge" in her high heels and sari. The weeks we spent at Rangamati were joyously happy. June and Billy said since their father's death a year or so earlier they had not been showered with such avuncular affection and felt my father was like a father to them. None of us had the slightest inkling that within a year my father too would die, not only dissolving my fond hopes and happy dreams of more such reunions but from a new awaking sense of beauty, freedom and joy, and jettisoning me into a life of sombre responsibility.

While I awaited my Cambridge results in early 1951 Barada Kumar Bhattacharjee advised father and mother to get me, at 17, married before going to England. When he was told that I was yet too young he remonstrated. "I was married at fifteen" he said. "My health is unexceptionable. Early marriage is good for the system and it saves young people from getting into bad habits." He was not thinking merely of my health, which was, like his, good, nor was he unduly concerned about "bad habits," as being a Polonius-like shrewd old man, he must have known that I had lost my innocence already. It had happened when I was around fifteen through the co-operation of a considerably older woman. And having tasted the joys of carnal love, I was all for it. Mother told me about Barada Babu's advice. As far as my parents were concerned they had no objection to my marrying a European girl if I chose to do so. What they felt was that I should have a measure of maturity before deciding upon such an important matter as marriage. Still, mother knew of my love for Arati, and so did my father. Father would sometimes tease me about her. "When you come back from England," he once said to me, quite seriously, "you could get married if you both chose". But, I imagine he felt I would fall in and out of love many times before that. In 1951, he was aware I had stopped going to see Arati and that the matter was over with. He thought my loves were never serious or stable, and I am sure he put it down to youth if not heredity. He may have wondered whether I was going to take after grandfather, a May-born Taurean too, and by no means a one-woman man.

To Barada Babu, an orthodox Hindu and Brahmin of the old school, there were the four divinely ordained castes, originally *Varna* (colour) in Sanskrit. The Brahmin came from the mouth of Brahma the creator and was the highest caste. The Kshatriya or warrior caste of Kings and soldiers issued forth from the arms of the creator. The Vaisya, or merchants and traders, were the third and the menial Shudra was the fourth of the Aryan castes. Those outside the castes were the scum of the earth or the Untouchables. The Europeans and Caucasians are collectively termed swetangas or white-bodied, and are, to the fastidious and proud Brahmin, unclean and inferior, whose touch pollutes. This is the reason why in earlier times when high caste Hindus returned from England after higher education they were considered to have lost caste for having lived and eaten with untouchables. They were socially ostracized and were accepted only after performing certain purificatory rites. Barada Babu's concern was that being "handsome, and of a romantic disposition," I was certain to "fall into the clutches of some *mleccha swetangini*" and not only marry her but probably settle down in England and never come back home.

Among us, as Buddhists and hillmen, all humans are equal beings, there is no caste distinction at all, and some practices of the Brahmins struck us as ludicrous. Barada Babu, when he wanted appreciation used to say that he had earned two pensions because he had served grandfather, father and me for fifty years. He had many children. The youngest, Tunu, was a year older than I, and my best friend at home. He would have tea and sweets with us but he would not share a proper meal. This is because the food had not been cooked by a Brahmin. When we went for picnics on the banks of the Rangamati stream, these Brahmins would cook separately, though they sat and ate with the rest of us. And while they ate, they would not speak to anyone nor permit any non-Brahmin to touch them.

Once while Tunu and his older brother Manik were having lunch in their kitchen, I deliberately touched Tunu on the shoulder. He immediately stopped eating and clutching the sacred white thread he always wore across his shoulder, rushed to the pond behind his house, to wash away the polluted touch. I threatened to do it again just for fun, but he begged me so piteously not to, that I relented. At times I would go into their schoolroom, one of the rooms in the *kutchery*, while they studied. I found Tunu and his older brothers each reading his own book, be it History or English or Bengali, at the top of their voices together. I was puzzled a little as I could not understand how they could concentrate. We were taught to read aloud only when the tutor wanted to hear us, at other times we read silently. Tunu, whose formal name was Sushil, explained that if he tried to read silently he could not absorb what he was reading. After his matriculation Tunu left for college in India where he had relatives. Unfortunately, in his old age Barada Babu received a great personal shock. One of his sons, Sukumar (Nona), perhaps academically the brightest, was in the final stages of his medical studies when he and the girl he loved both committed suicide. The girl happened to belong to a lower caste and Barada Babu had refused them permission to marry.

In early 1951, I entered my name in a number of events at the Hill Tracts General Sports Meet, and put in a bit of practice a couple of weeks before sports day. "Do you think you can compete with those big hefty policemen?" Father said, sounding unintentionally protective and discouraging. However, I felt supremely confident though there was no reason for doing so, just because I happened to be the school champion. "I can, I can," I said in reply. Father had his doubts but did not say anything more. I won every event I competed in and also the championship. When we were back home, he said, "I am proud of you." He looked radiant. That was the only time I remember his praising me in so many words. As he was generally reticent about his feelings, I felt immensely elated.

The results of my Senior Cambridge examination came one evening, when after a game of badminton I was chatting with some friends near the temple pond. A servant came running with the news. "You have passed your examination," he shouted from a distance, panting and heaving. "Our lord is calling you." I rushed to my father. He was very happy and showed me the telegram which he proudly sent around to our relatives. Details of the results arrived a few days later. I had got credits in seven subjects including mathematics, and honours in English. My job was to have got six credits including mathematics and English. As I had done more than that, father was quite happy. Now all he wanted me to do was go to England and come back as a barrister-at-law. In a few weeks my admission into Lincoln's Inn was confirmed.

A week or so later, father went to an exhibition of arts and crafts across the river. The Deputy Commissioner, Lt. Colonel John Angus Hume, had requested him to give away the prizes on the final day. When he returned, he came and sat beside me in the main downstairs drawing room. "I saw Nibaran's daughter, Arati, today," he said quietly. "There was a weaving competition and Arati won the prize." He looked at me with an odd expression on his face. "She looked sad," he added softly. Then turning to mother, who was seated nearby, he said wistfully, "For the first time I felt like a father-in-law today." Some days later he gave me the only piece of advice he ever did on the subject of love and marriage. "For a successful marriage," he explained, "it is more important that your wife should love you than that you should love her."

I still loved Arati, but my hurt pride continued to rankle. It did not strike me that even if she was in love it was a little unrealistic to expect her to wait for me to come back from abroad after three or four years and marry her. In my pride I forgot that for a girl to take the word of a boy of seventeen, without either a formal betrothal or a word from his parents, was not possible. I refused also to see myself through the eyes of Arati's parents, who could justifiably doubt a mere expression of intent from a teenager and especially one who flitted from girl to girl. They naturally had qualms about my retaining my love for their daughter from thousands of miles and cultures away in England. Arati's father had already had his two older daughters married. One of them was not happy and blamed him for getting her married without her consent. She had refused at first, but her father had badgered her until she had eventually

given in. Now this daughter held him responsible for her unhappiness, and so he had told his wife that come what may he would never try to persuade any of his other daughters to marry anyone. She must be fully willing, and if she never married he would not mind but he would not coerce her. Arati, in her heart, may have believed in my love but I think she doubted, not my intentions, but my nature. However hopeless her love for me may have appeared to her, and however hurt she must have felt when she heard of my peccadilloes, she continued to refuse every proposal for marriage that came her way.

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Raja Tridiv Roy as the best individual player of Chittagong Hill Tracts & his team (Chief's XI) winner of Hume Cup 1954-55.

CHAPTER XXI

Father's Death

We were staying in our Chittagong house Rajapur, a neat bungalow on a hill in Anderkilla (inner fortress) area, about half a mile from the Shah Shuja Mosque and a couple of furlongs from the red General Hospital building on an eastern hill. There was a sizeable lawn, an ancient banyan tree of immense girth at the southern end, and a single casuarina tree at the southwestern end. In the mid-day heat the breeze soughing through its wispy spindly clusters had a soothing, soporific effect. On the southeastern slope there was a lychee tree. The lawn was bare except for a few scented flowering shrubs. Below the hill to the west was the Rani Ramamayee Dighi (a large excavated pond), that was open to the general public who bathed in it by the hundreds everyday. The hill opposite was known as Forest Hill and housed the Divisional Forest Officer and later the Conservator of Forests. The Forest Department paid an annual rent of Rs. 50 to the Raja. From my grandfather's time to mine we received this annually until the Zamindari Abolition Act in the 1950s, and even after. These lands were given for use to the government on a 99-year lease. To the southwest on another hill stood the imposing Commissioner's House. The ceiling of the front veranda too was lofty. My ancestors, Maharaja Dharam Bux and Rani Kalindi used to come from Rangunea on elephants with the howdah and dismount on the veranda. The British Government used to pay house rent for it upto my father's time. When N.M. Khan became Commissioner of Chittagong Division he had it requisitioned, then, with about 14 acres in the heart of the city, it was acquired by Government at a ridiculously low sum. I took the matter to Court and was awarded a sum that was almost three times the amount fixed by government. However, if I could have got it back and sold it at market value I would have received much, much more.

At the breakfast table, on the mornings of 5 and 6 October 1951, father told us of his dreams which he normally kept to himself. "Last night I dreamt that Bhengadi had died," he said with a smile. "So she'll live longer." She was a sort of super nanny and in charge of Johnny. The following morning he again disclosed his dream. This time it was the death of a girl-cousin of mine. According to Chakma belief to dream a person's death means longevity for that person. Both these persons are still alive, fifty years later, and may they live another fifty.

7 October 1951 was for me a beginning and an end, and more an end than a beginning. My father died suddenly before the eyes of his family. He was struck down at 7 in the morning by a stroke of cerebral haemorrhage and by 5 in the afternoon he was dead. It was the first death in our immediate family, and a new experience. We had not witnessed death before – only heard of it. This sudden and traumatic event made Didi, my older sister Amiti, ill for a while. To me father was the universe. I adored him and loved him most of all. When he died a part of me died

and in his place there is an emptiness that no other love has been able to fill entirely. We are six brothers and sisters. After Amiti (Didi) and I there was a gap of ten years, then arrived Samit (Johnny), Moitri (Buri), Rajasree (Rakhi), and Nandit (Renny) born on 1 September 1951, and for whose birth we had all gone to Chittagong, to be close to better medical facilities for mother if the need should arise.

The 49-year old Raja Nalinaksha Roy, the 49th Raja of Chakma, was dead, leaving me at 18 to shoulder as best I could the hereditary responsibility of the family, and of our beloved people, the Chakma. The Chakma Rajas have been generally shortlived. Raja Bhuvan Mohan Roy, my grandfather, was perhaps the longest lived, with 58 years to his credit. Rani Kalindi died in her early 60s, but the world over women live longer. Bhuvan Mohan's father Raja Harish Chandra (he succeeded to the Raj through his mother, for there was no male issue of Maharaja Dharam Bux) died when he was 47. Harish Chandra's grandfather, Dharam Bux died at the age of 36. Before Dharam Bux too, they were shortlived except for Bura Barua and Janu who were independent rulers, other details of whose histories are lost in the mists of antiquity.

Hill students studying at Chittagong lived and boarded together in two bungalows with roofs of corrugated iron sheets on our land to the east below the Rajapur hill. They had shifted here from their former "Hill Students Lodge" at Jamal Khan Road. They did a lot of running about and helped to get things organized. Hillmen officers in Chittagong and many leading citizens came to offer condolences, and some weeping Bengali tenants from our Chittagong Estate.

Deputy Commissioner Hume was out of Rangamati, on tour down in the south. As soon as he heard the news he rushed to Chittagong. Some of our relatives and leading personalities from distant parts of the Tracts also arrived, some with red swollen eyes. We chartered one of Dobash Company's passenger motor launches, and a day or two later we headed for the riverside in a motorcade in the morning. Finally we got the coffin – Hume helping as a pall bearer – on board at the Rai Bahadur Abhay Mitra Ghat (Jetty) and started for Rangamati.

When my grandfather was young there used to be enough water in the Karnafuli to permit two river steamers, "Swallow" and "Swift" to ply to Rangamati twice a week. With increasing deforestation and riverside cultivation the river had silted up in patches and only shallow draught motor launches could come up river to Rangamati. Until the late 1940s Dobash Company had the monopoly. Mansab Ali and Company then joined with two motor launches, and later A.K. Khan with business connections in Burma, who became a Minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet. Some locals entered the scene and operated on the lake after it was formed above Kaptai in 1960. An unmetalled jeepable road between Rangamati and Chittagong was not in place until the 1950s.

Late in the afternoon, the launch rounded the Kalibari bend of peninsular Rangamati, where the bazar was located, and approached the middle *ghat* of the old

Rajbari on the left bank to the east. We saw thousands on the riverside, and a low moan of weeping men and women greeted us. Father was a lovable person, kindly, and a good Buddhist. He was ever courteous, compassionate and serene, a gentle and noble man.

For a couple of days the coffin lay in state on a catafalque in the north veranda downstairs at the old Rajbari, just as his father's had done in September 1934. People came to offer their last respects and the customary coin so that the departed may pay the ferryman when crossing to the farther shore of the Baitarini River, the equivalent of the Styx of the ancient Greeks. At the cremation ground Buddhist monks and tribal priests called Raolis (or Loris) performed the time-honoured rituals. The coffin was placed on an immense bamboo chariot festooned with bunting and decorative split bamboo. It was mounted atop four huge wooden wheels. Long, thick ropes were tied to the ends of the chariot and thousands of people joined in the traditional tug of war, which is a common feature at funerals of members of the Royal family and senior Buddhist monks.

During grandfaher's funeral in September 1934 a great dispute had arisen and a fray ensued; once before too when grandfather himself was accidentally jostled in the tug of war that was on clan basis, Kurakutya versus Dhamai *Goza*. After that in the funerary tug of wars they had stuck to non-clannish calls. Married versus bachelors, was one such. The tug of war on this occasion ended without incident. The convenient custom says whichever side has won represents heaven.

I, as the eldest son, had to ignite the pyre with sandalwood sticks. Then, each in turn, family members, relatives and noblemen followed, and then the rest. Didi broke all traditions by insisting on going to the cremation ground though women customarily refrain from doing so. The next morning I immersed his mortal remains in a ceremony called "Floating the Bones" in the Karnafuli. A few remains were kept in the temple to be immersed in the river Niranjana at Bodhgaya, India, which I did the following year. This small town in Bihar is where the Buddha attained enlightenment. The river has possibly gone subterranean. One digs into the sand of the river bed and deposits the mortal remains of parents and ancestors, and Buddhist monks recite sutras.

On the sixth day I went to the cremation ground to ritualistically invite the spirit to the ceremonies on the following day. The *Sradh* on the 7th day after "Floating the bones," consisted of feeding monks, Raolis and people, hearing mantras from the former – there were more than a hundred monks from the Hill Tracts, and quite a few from Chittagong District – and in dedicating gifts to the departed through the monks and priests. Johnny, Renny and I shaved our heads and Johnny and I wore *dhotis* and Punjabis/Kurta, (like the night shirt of olden days, worn in most parts of the subcontinent) and white *chadars* for the occasion, while Renny remained dressed in his baby clothes, as he was a month and a half old.

During the next month, once or twice, at dead of night I visited the cremation ground with an old servant called Phulsingh. Because my spirit was in turmoil I sought to commune with father and seek guidance. Strangely enough, on occasion suddenly there would be a fragrance of incense and rosewater that had been used on father after he had died. Even sitting at home we would at times be assailed with this inexplicable fragrance. And grandmother, two cousins and the family were aware of it, sometimes singly but many times collectively. This wafting fragrance finally disappeared some months later.

There are no two opinions among the different schools of Buddhists about life after death. The life force of karmic succession, on death, is reborn in Kamaloka, Rupaloka or Arupaloka, until achievement of Nirvana. The first is the world of man and animal, the next the world of form or spirit, where too there are gradations, and the last the formless world of mind only. The Karma or cumulative and single acts, by thought, speech and deed, determines the sphere of birth and the potentials in the next life. The last thought of an individual before the death thought moment is called the Javana process, consisting of five thought moments. It is important in that it acts as a selector of the next existence. Whereas the last thought determines the next life, before the actual death thought moment, one's Karma conditions it. If the door of a cattle pen is opened, a calf, even though it is smaller and weaker, will first go outside if it is near the door, rather than a powerful bull if the latter is at the farther end of the pen. It is, therefore, important that if possible a monk should be summoned at one's deathbed as in the case of Muslims and Roman Catholics and some others, so that the last thought may be on an elevated plane.

The last thought may result in rebirth as a prince but the accumulated Karma determines the potentials – whether he will be an intelligent prince or a stupid one, a healthy one or a sickly or shortlived one. His propensities and predispositions likewise will be determined by past deeds. However, though these factors as well as his parents and his environment will affect and condition the individual in a new life, what he or she actually does, the volitional acts, will determine the consequences, good and evil, positive and negative. Because of the interrelatedness of phenomena no action is performed in isolation in a vacuum. The consequence of every action therefore, wholesome and unwholesome, affects not only oneself but all sentient beings and all manifest and unmanifest dimensions of life and nature as well.

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CHAPTER XXII

Formal Accession

The Government of Pakistan had recognized me as the Chakma Raja but the question of my formal accession was open. According to the Government of India Act of 1935, which was still the constitutional edifice in force in Pakistan, I had attained majority because at the time of my father's death I was 18 years of age. I was a major in all respects save that I could not adopt anyone nor contract a civil marriage, or embrace a new religion, none of which was of immediate relevance. Had I been younger then I would have had to wait till I was 21, as in the case of my grandfather. When his father, Raja Harish Chandra Roy Bahadur had died, Bhuvan Mohan was about 7. His formal accession took place on 7 May 1897, three days after his completing 21 years of age, according to the law obtaining then.

The question was whether I should be formally installed now, or complete my law studies in England, and then be installed. This was a matter of discussion for some time amongst various members of the family and close relatives. A greatuncle of mine, Didima's brother Justice A.N. Sen, a senior judge of the High Court of Calcutta, wrote to my mother. I had met him once or twice in Calcutta. He was kindly and acutely perceptive. His advice was not to delay the installation, to take over the reins of administration fully and officially become the Raja. Legal studies were a luxury and my place was beside my people. After all, it was important for me to be a good Raja more than a successful lawyer. A law degree would have been an asset, but my first duty was to take my father's place and continue to discharge my responsibilities to my people. This was also the view of my advisers, leading dewans and headmen. My mother and the majority of relatives agreed with this view too.

It was put to me that to go away for such a long time, and in the unsettled circumstances extant, would amount to mere self-indulgence and an evasion of my responsibility to my people. I think many were also afraid that the regent might, during my absence, try to consolidate his position and oust me out of my inheritance. When this was explained to me I said I had confidence in my people, and if on my return they preferred the regent to me, it would merely mean that my confidence had been misplaced and I would bow out. I think that most of the family members and relatives were more apprehensive of my giving up my rights and staying on in England than in anyone's usurping them. They moreover totally lacked any faith in the East Pakistan Government, who might prefer a malleable puppet, and in my absence try to strengthen his position. My personal inclinations were to the contrary. I would have preferred a regent to carry on the business of administration on my behalf for three or four years while I was in England. My motive was not unselfish. I was keen on a law degree but keener at the prospect of a carefree life and a good time in England. Being the chief also entailed the arduous task of looking after the estates in Chittagong district besides trying to solve the myriad problems of the people in the

Tracts, and undertake the perpetual tussle between the government and the hillpeople. I wanted to enjoy life a little longer before getting enmeshed in all this forever. It is not that I wanted to shirk my responsibilities, only to postpone them in favour of a last fling.

Nevertheless I decided to take their advice. In 1952, the government issued formal orders of my recognition. Between 7 October 1951 and 2 March 1953, when I formally ascended the gadi and got married – the interregnum – was fraught with emotional strains as well as a period of growing up, and of finding my feet. These consisted of my Didi's illness, occasional differences with mother, sifting and gauging my officers and advisers, getting to know the hillmen leaders, adjudicating disputes, dealing with an unsympathetic provincial government, trying to protect the hillmen from plainsmen exploiters and from some harsh and corrupt government functionaries. I was exploring, experimenting, gaining insight into human motivation and behaviour, facing life and taking the hurdles as they came. In 1952, when I was still in my teens, the government also made me an Honorary Magistrate. It was a signal mark of esteem, which was greatly appreciated by the hillpeople.

In the summer of 1952, Kakki, her eldest son, my cousin Chiranjib, Didi and I went for a change to Shillong, a hill station in Assam, and later the capital of the Meghalaya State of India, which was the joining of two districts, Khasia Jayantia Hills and Garo Hills. We spent about two months there. Didi and I had last visited Shillong as children during the Second World War in the early 1940s and had stayed in a rented house at a locality called Burnside. I remember with our parents we had visited a Jewish lady who was a friend of the Congress leader Dr. B.C. Roy, who subsequently became the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Didi and I played with the lady's nephews Simon and Easy, about our age. We had delicious pastries and the lady of the house gave Didi and me the biggest slabs of Nestle` chocolate we had ever seen (even upto today). Didi's had a blue wrapper and mine was red.

When we were in Calcutta in 1943, father had taken me to see Dr. B.C. Roy once for some stomach problem. I remember he seemed preoccupied and when he wrote out a prescription, there were two crossed out changes in the words. I presume he was more successful as a politician than as a doctor, after partition becoming the second Chief Minister of West Bengal as well as Governor. His treatment did me no good and finally Col. Gow suggested half a dozen or so of some injections, once a day. That cured my blood dysentery. Father would take me to the Magnolia Icecream place on Park Street and every day I had an icecream, to compensate for the daily discomfort of the injection.

Then, on another occasion, mother had Didi, who was about 8, dressed up in a sari (normally worn at the age of 12 or more) with a red vermilion circle between her eyebrows. When my parents called on the Governor and Amy Reid at the Government House in Shillong, the Governor displayed his insouciance of Indian culture by asking if his goddaughter was married. The vermilion mark on the

forehead was purely decorative, whereas the mark on the hair parting denoted marital status, (like the Hawaiian woman who wears the hibiscus on the right in her hair if she is married.) On the other hand the Governor was perhaps gently hinting his disapproval of what he considered an unwelcome alien cultural invasion into indigenous custom and integrity.

Sir Robert Reid, the last British Governor of Assam, had noted: "They (the hill tribes of North-East India) are not Indian in any sense of the word, neither in origin, nor in language, nor in appearance, nor in habit, nor in outlook, and it is a historical accident that they have been tacked on to an Indian province." This quotation is to be found in *Crossfire* by Subir Bhaumik (Insurgent North-East India), where he goes on to say: "Reid's concern that Britain should give 'sufficient protection to the tribes in the wake of the remarkable political advance made in India' was instrumental in his sponsoring the Crown Colony scheme for a hill state comprising areas of North-East India and upper Burma, to be ruled from London after the British had formally withdrawn from the subcontinent."

Chiranjib knew Shillong well as he had graduated from St. Anthony's College here. We rented a house on Upland Road near the school and church of Don Bosco. Recently the municipality had put up a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in front of it, at the crossroads. Possibly it was of marble or alabaster because it was white, but the stick he carried was yellow brown and looked rather real. The predominant people in these Khasia and Jaintia Hills are the Khasias, a progressive and colourful people, mainly Christians, with a matriarchal society, like the Garos.

We met, among others, the Raja and Rani of Bijni and their daughter Uma, who was a very fine young girl with a serenity and simple dignity that I admired. We also met the Raja and Rani of Sidley, who was the daughter of the Maharaja of one of the South Indian states, perhaps Pithampuram. The poet Rabindranath Tagore used to stay in their commodious Sidley House on visits to Shillong. It was here that he had written "Glimpses of Bengal." There were plum trees laden with fruit in the spacious garden tastefully embellished with flowerbeds and shrubs. The Rani and I used to take dance lessons in their villa from a Goanese gentleman called Mark. The Raja and Rani would invite us to the Shillong Club sometimes, where I became a temporary member and played badminton quite often, and occasionally billiards. We made friends with a visiting Anglo-Indian family called McGowen, who were friendly and fun loving. They were on vacation too and had rented a house on Upland Road. At the Tripura Castle I also briefly glimpsed Priti, daughter of the Maharaja of Tripura, then a shy and delicate 14 and a student of the Loreto Convent in Shillong. Aunt Sudhira was related to them and she and the senior dowager Maharani (Priti's grandmother), who was the daughter of the King of Nepal, conversed in their own Tripuri language Kokborok. We made many friends including the East Pakistan Girl Guides Commissioner Mrs. Zahiruddin's large family, and the Kakoli family where Gyanada sang for the radio, and Niroda the younger sister sang beautifully though not professionally yet. She was at college still. We also met "Pankaj", then a senior student at Pinemount Girls' School, a well-known rival to Loreteo Convent, and one

or two others of the younger generation of the popular and talented Hazarika family who were our parents' friends. Pankaj later married a businessman in Chittagong, who unfortunately took to heavy drinking, and died comparatively young. We visited the waterfalls, attended horse races and thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Shillong.

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Monks and astrologers determined 2 March 1953 to be the auspicious day for my installation ceremony. I held meetings with my advisers and senior headmen, and made plans for the ceremonies. A bridge had to be built on the Karnafuli, thousands had to be fed, monks had to be invited from all over East Pakistan, *jatra* parties had to be arranged and the amount of tax the people would have to pay for the ceremony had to be fixed and collected. Barada Kumar Bhattacharjee, and some of my relatives advised me to get married. Their view was that marriage would have a stabilizing influence on my life. They were also of the view that since a huge expenditure was to be incurred and time and effort expended in organizing the installation ceremony, it would hardly be wise to do it all over again in a few years' time. The people would also be saved from the burden of paying another tax, as by tradition they paid a marriage tax on the occasion. They also felt that if I had a wife and family, not only would my ties with the Tracts be made stronger, but that the possibility of my making a fetish of impregnating the womenfolk of the realm and thereby being a menace to fathers of nubile daughters would be attenuated, although they did not say so in so many words. I put my seniormost Uncle, Kakku in charge of the arrangements for the installation and discussed the question of marriage with him. While all this was underway, marriageable daughters of leading dewans and headmen visited the Rajbari and I had the opportunity of seeing some pretty girls. It was all very proper and no such young girl visited unchaperoned. As most of them were related in one way or another, ostensibly they were merely family courtesy calls.

At first I treated the idea of getting married lightly and could not conceive the idea of giving up my freedom which I viewed with rose tinted glasses. Oriental male chauvinism notwithstanding, marriage did put a halter on you, if not blinkers as well. However, when I was squarely faced with the issue I thought that all things considered, to get married perhaps was the best thing to do. Having come to that conclusion, I informed Kakku that I would like to marry Arati.

Rasik Mohan Dewan, our Dewan and seniormost official and also a mutual relative, went to Arati's grandfather Chandra Mohan Dewan with the proposal. The old man readily assented without even consulting his son Nibaran. The following day he went to Chandraghona, where his son was the head of police. Arati told me later that one afternoon her grandfather suddenly arrived and after greeting him she teasingly asked if his visit had a purpose. "Yes," he replied, "to solemnize your marriage with the Raja." Arati thought he was joking but on finding that he was serious she said, "I don't want to marry at all," and left his presence.

Her image of me, of our love of innocence and purity had been tarnished. Not only had I ceased communicating, even if at her and her parents' behest, her feminine logic perhaps wanted me to continue writing letters to her, or trying to get in touch. In addition, there were rumours of my almost marrying any number of girls from the Hill Tracts as well as from diverse parts of the subcontinent. Despite all this and her hurt pride, she rejoiced in her heart at the proposal because she loved me. Her parents did not even consult her this time, unlike the previous marriage proposals that she had steadfastly rejected. It was not due to the fact that she was going to be the Rani, but because they knew who was in her heart. They shifted to Hazaribagh, five miles up the Karnafuli River from Rangamati, where Arati's father had agricultural lands and a farm and some of his relatives too had lands nearby. Their main home and properties were located at Bhusanchara, forty miles up the river Karnafuli from Rangamati and twelve miles above the picturesque Barkal rapids, where in 1872 the British had built a trolley line to transport men and arms and rations upstream for the Lushai expedition that annexed the Lushai Hills, today's Mizoram.

On the auspicious day Kakku led a delegation of our relatives to Hazaribagh for the betrothal ceremony in a procession of decorated dugout canoes. A pair of coconuts and a bottle of country liquor were the customary requisites, and a ring. With these along with ornaments, saris, clothes and sweets they landed at Hazaribagh. By custom the prospective groom keeps away. They finalized the arrangements for the wedding, and after a gargantuan repast came back as elated and happy as Arati's parents. People all over the Hill Tracts were gratified with the news that I was marrying Arati because they had heard of our youthful romance and they preferred the Rani to be one of their own kind. After the betrothal I saw Arati at their Rangamati house where she and her parents had come for a few days. She also came to the Rajbari with her grandmother and other older relatives once and we had dinner and in a foursome played carom together.

This indoor game on a wooden board with four pockets was popular in the subcontinent, even when father was a student. He was good at it and would often score a "century" I was told. One of his youthful friends at carom was Lila De, the pretty daughter of the Chittagong Divisional Commissioner. Later she married the Raj Kumar of Santosh, one of father's college friends. A century meant striking all nine pieces called "men" (as in a game of draughts, in the US called checkers) as well as the red into any of the four pockets, at one go. This must be achieved without missing a shot, like potting all the balls in a game of snooker. Abroad, this game is rarely seen or even heard of.

On 2 March 1953 the installation durbar took place in the early afternoon amidst traditional pomp and ceremony at the Rajbari durbar hall known as the nachkhana. Deputy Commissioner Hume read out the proclamation beginning with the archaic and dignified, "Let it be known by these presents....." Government police presented an honour guard and fired three rounds from their rifles. Pir Ahsanuddin, Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, on behalf of the government presented a sword to me. Political leaders and headmen read out eulogies and paeans

composed for the occasion and there was rejoicing. Kumar Momphru Sain, who would become the Mong Raja a year later on his mother's death, presented me a gold medallion with the engraved Mong Raj crest. The Chakma Raj coat of arms has two rampant elephants, the Bohmong's tigers, and the Mong's a pair of peacocks.

Among the distinguished guests at the durbar was the beautiful and vivacious Lady Viqarun Nisa Noon, the English wife of Governor Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon, who had been undivided India's High Commissioner to the Court of St. James's (London) many years ago, and who took over from Acting Governor Abdur Rahman Siddiqui telegraphically. After a four-month stay in England he and Vicky Noon arrived in Karachi on 12 November 1952, then the new Governor and his wife proceeded to Dhaka. (Sir Firoz later would also become the Prime Minister of Pakistan.) Lady Noon was dressed in a pearl grey sari and was accompanied by an ADC, resplendent in his white naval uniform. In the evening Vicky Noon attended the wedding celebrations. Some years later Vicky Noon became known as a philanthropist and also held public office as Minister of State and Chairperson of the Tourism Corporation. She also served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Portugal. Didima also came all the way from Calcutta to be present at the installation and wedding ceremonies. She still smoked the King Stork, in profusion, and was outgoing and chirpy as ever. Mother's first cousin, Kalyani Mashi, who was formally Begum Rehmat Ali Khan, came a day or two before the ceremonies and stayed with us. Uncle Rehmat was with Burmah Shell Oil Company at Dhaka then.

Kakku, at the head of a flotilla of canopied canoes, again headed the delegation to Hazaribagh, this time to fetch the bridal party. The bride arrived in a boat with a decorative gilded peacock at the bow. From the riverbank to the Rajbari the bride and her party were carried in brocaded palanquins on the shoulders of traditional serfs from Rajanagar, in a procession with the guards and the bands and drummers. Arati was dressed in a gold Benares silk sari and coronet and ornaments, and at the threshold had to cross the seven strands of thread, as custom demands. There was the bridal feast. Late at night, at the predetermined auspicious moment, Arati and I were married. There was the Chakma ceremony followed by the Buddhist religious one as well. As was customary Arati and I stayed apart for three days after which we journeyed to her parents' place in Hazaribagh for the *beasutbhanga* ceremonies. We spent some idyllic days there.

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"Bohmong", which means the Great Captain or Commander, and his house has antiquity dating to the Kings of Arakan. They appeared in the southern Hill Tracts from the Shan States and Arakan, according to tradition. According to some, "the British had set the Prue family up to strengthen the border outposts and used to give them grants to help against incursions from marauders from Burma into British territory."

Kyaw Jaw San Prue Choudhry, the son of the 12th Bohmong Keojai Prue, was installed as the 13th Bohmong Raja in 1933, two years before my father. He had fathered thirty-seven princes and princesses in wedlock, through his seven Ranis. Father told me that one year after an annual Chiefs' Conference held with the Divisional Commissioner at Banderban, the Bohmong's capital, the Bohmong had summoned some of his sons and daughters and had them line up. "Choose, Raja Sahib", he said. "Any one of them for your son or daughter." In those days our younger brothers and sisters had not been born. Didi was then perhaps ten years old. The Bohmong was not tall but he was well proportioned, with a pleasant round face and a little rosebud mouth. He was fair complexioned and had jetblack hair. A devout man, he spent three months during the Buddhist lent called *Vas* in the monastery and observed all the ceremonies with due solemnity.

Once, in early 1953, Governor General Ghulam Mohammad visited Rangamati. He asked the ailing Bohmong how he was keeping. Promptly he replied, "No at all well, Your Excellency." Ghulam Mohammad himself was a sick man. As a consequence of a stroke his mouth was slightly awry and his speech was slurred and he walked with a shuffle. But he would not hand over power, and subsequently was bundled off from the Governor General's House, Karachi, more or less literally on Iskander Mirza's orders.

"I hope you get well soon," he lisped.

"If Your Excellency wishes so, I am sure I'll be well," replied the redoubtable Bohmong, trying to sound affable and attenuating somewhat his instinctive if gauche earlier reply.

The Governor Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon had heard the exchange. A little later, as we were having tea at the Deputy Commissioner's house, where the Governor General was staying, the Governor said, "Why don't you come to Dhaka? We'll show you to a good doctor. You come and stay with me." The Bohmong, in his late fifties, preoccupied with some real and some not so real ailments, nodded absently and said, "What is your address?" "Tell him, Angus," Sir Firoz said to Col Hume, the Deputy Commissioner, with a smile. "And send him to us." Later the Bohmong complained to me. "With G.G. there, no one pointed out the Governor to me. How was I to know?" He shook his head sadly. He was a character, the Bohmong was. He died in 1958.

The Bohmong Maung Shwe Prue, born in 1915, was installed in 1959. He was the 14th Bohmong Raja and was a half-brother of Bohmong Kyaw Jaw San. Maung Shwe Prue's first wife Rani Anuttara (Tukkabi) is a Chakma, the direct descedant of Ranu Khan and Ishan Dewan of the Wangza sept. In 1965 he was a Provincial Minister in Monem Khan's cabinet during the Pakistan period. In Bangladesh he was a Minister in 1986. He died on 15 June 1996.

The Chiefs, it has been found, or at least two, often follow each other closely in matters of final departure. And in keeping with tradition, my father having died on 7 October 1951, the Lady Mong Chief died in 1954. The Bohmong Kyaw Jaw San

Raja Tridiv Roy: Wedding photo with Rani Arati Roy 2 March 1953

Prue too did not lag too far behind either. As there was nothing to indicate that the custom of courtesy was over, I used to tell the new Mong Raja (Prince Hal of Kutubdia fame) born on 10 November 1910 at Manikcheri Rajbari and installed in 1954, to give me a little notice to put things in order if he decided to "shuffle off this mortal coil." Being overweight, he would boast he had given up eating dinner. And he had. He did not sit at table with others for the meal. He merely devoured a whole chicken, a leg of mutton or a haunch of venison from sunset to bedtime in one protracted meal, accompanied by three quarters of Chivas Regal or J. Walker, black label. He died in 1984. I did not follow quickly, perhaps because I was not living in the Hill Tracts, and my responsibilities were being shouldered by my son, Raja Devasish.

CHAPTER XXIII

Chakma Raja's verdict

A few months after my ascending the *gadi* one Joymangal Chakma from the Kassalong reserved forest lodged a complaint in my court that his daughter had been kidnapped or enticed away by a plainsman labourer of the forest department and he sought restitution.

According to Chakma law if an unmarried girl, irrespective of age, elopes with someone (be he Marlon Brando, Jackie Chan, the King of Timbuktu, a hillman or otherwise) the offending pair have to pay a fine and a pig to the respective villagers, who feast on it. However, if the man is a Muslim (though rare there had been a few cases, from my grandfather's time to mine) and as a pig is taboo to a Muslim, a goat is substituted.

In any event, the girl by law must be returned to her father or legal guardian. There are three ways out; one is (and this often happens) the parents of the boy prevail upon the aggrieved father to give his consent for a price, in cash or kind (cattle, grain). The second *modus vivendi* is for the Young Lochinvar to live in his father-in-law's house and work the jum together for a stipulated number of years. The third alternative, if the father proves adamant, is to elope four times.

On the fourth time, consent or no parental consent, the lovers can marry provided they are not of a prohibited degree relationship. The father's right over his daughter for three times may either be proof of eastern male dominance or may be it is to ensure that the young couple have an abiding love for each other, rather than a passing fancy.

As mentioned earlier, in 1952 I had been made an honorary magistrate. I was then hardly 19 years of age. Perhaps I was the youngest in Pakistan's history and may be in that of British India as well. I had also been recognized as the Chakma Raja and had been exercising judicial and administrative powers that had nothing to do with the cases I tried as an honorary magistrate, which were sent to me by the Sub-divisional Magistrate on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner. He merely sent the cases and that too non-tribal cases, but even on these he did not hear the appeals.

Upto the annexation of the Hill Tracts by the British in 1860 the trial of all civil and criminal cases were left in the hands of the Taluk Dewans whose verdict was final except that death sentences had to be confirmed by the Chakma Raja. However, after 1860 the British began to arrogate power and authority to themselves and to whittle down the powers of the chiefs. By the turn of the century they did away altogether with the office of the Taluk Dewans. The Chief's verdict was always final. However, in the later regulations after 1900 it was stipulated that in

adjudications the Chief's verdict was "ordinarily" final; and a rider was added: subject to the revisional (not appellate) jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner. In a rare instance in the latter part of the British rule a case went to the Deputy Commissioner G.L. Hyde for revision. He differed with the judgment of my father, Raja Nalinaksha. The aggrieved party appealed to the Divisional Commissioner, who set aside the Deputy Commissioner's findings. The opposite party appealed to the Board of Revenue who set aside the Commissioner's verdict. The case then went on final appeal to the Governor of Bengal who upheld the verdict of the Chakma Raja.

Joymangal Chakma's case came to me in June 1953 and in a few days it turned into a prestige issue between the hillmen on one side, and the plainsmen, including some of the highest government officials, on the other. At the instigation of the sub-divisional officer of Rangamati, Abdul Sobhan, a lot of trumped-up criminal cases were instituted in his court against the father of the girl, alleging that he had received money and had agreed to his daughter's marriage with the plainsman. The girl was made to file an affidavit – after a doctor's examination declaring her a major (agewise) – pronouncing her change of name from Amiyabala Chakma to "Something Bibi" and of having embraced not only the Islamic faith but also the man, Mukhtar Hussain, as her lawfully wedded husband.

In collusion with sub-Inspector of Police Sonameah, Sobhan had incited some Bengali shopkeepers and labourers to communal frenzy, though of course he knew that an aggrieved party could file a revision petition and so on upto the level of Governor and one should therefore await the Chief's verdict. For some reason I could not fathom Sobhan disliked me; in consequence I had not the greatest love for him either.

The Deputy Commissioner, Hume, was a Scots. In accordance with the rules embodied in the Hill Tracts Manual, he dismissed the objections against the case being tried by me. The trial proceeded in my court. On the final adjournment, the day I was to pronounce judgment, 27 July 1953, hundreds of plainsmen from across the river came to the court premises.

According to law if the father claims his daughter she must be handed over to him. The exceptions are if she has eloped three times before or if she is a divorcee or a widow, in which event she can marry according to her choice, provided they are not of prohibited degree relationship. The father, Joymangal, stuck to his stand and asked for the return of his daughter. I decreed restitution of Amiyabala to her father.

Pandemonium broke loose outside the courthouse. The crowd, mainly Bengalis tutored by Sobhan, turned into a mob. They took recourse to gross contempt of court, aggression and violence. A number of Bengalis rushed into the courtroom and snatching the girl bodily dragged her away. There were lots of people running towards the Rajbari, others away towards the river. Some of our guards, including my cousins, fired shots into the air from shotguns to scare away the violent mob. There

was a tussle for the girl between the hillmen supporters of the father and the plainsmen supporters of Mukhtar Hussain.

One of my gun toting cousins, by now near the corner of the courthouse about thirty yards from the ceremonial old cannon that stood outside the main gate, was jostled by the mob and fell down. At this indignity he lost his temper and let off a shotgun shell full of pellets. He rushed forward and from beside the cannon, he fired the second barrel. The mob made a beeline for the river and many, in stark terror, jumped into the water and waded and swam across. There were some seventeen or so casualties with pellet wounds on their buttocks and legs. They were taken to the government hospital across the river. The girl, also wounded, was brought into the Rajbari.

Across the river the plainsmen held meetings and shouted slogans crying for my blood and made plans to attack us at night. The Deputy Commissioner, the Superintendent of Police, and other officials came over to see me and we discussed all that had happened. The gunwielders and my bench clerk were taken into custody, and the government officials left.

In the evening I was sitting in the main drawing room downstairs in a bush shirt and slippers talking to someone. A little after dusk, a posse of policemen under a sub-inspector came into the room and the latter informed me that I was under arrest.

"You arrest me?"
"Yes," he said.
"All right, let me change my slippers."

He would not allow this. I think he was scared if I went upstairs I might get hold of a cannon and let him have it. Later he confirmed having thought exactly that, with a slight modification; replace cannon with revolver and you have the picture.

"OK, then, let's go," I said. And we went. I marched in slippers between policemen in boots with Sonameah, the sub-inspector, leading. From an upstairs window Didi witnessed the scene. "Where are you going?" she shouted out.

"I'm going across the river, under arrest," I shouted back.

The superintendent of police, R.A. Khan, a Punjabi who had spent most of his life in Burma, was waiting for me at the police station across the river. On the way, Sonameah, a bearded man noted for his anti-hillman sentiments, apologized to me. He said he was only carrying out orders and I should not hold anything against him.

"I don't blame you for the arrest," I said, and I did not, not for the act of arrest because I was not touched by any of them nor handcuffed. But my intelligence sources had earlier reported on his role in this case and his secret meetings with Abdul Sobhan.

Sonameah, some years ago, had sought to prohibit the sale of pork in Langadu Bazar, some fifty miles in the interior, where he was then posted. Normally a bazar in the Tracts is an area with stalls manned mainly by plainsmen shopkeepers. Once a week, sometimes twice, the bazar (market) day is held. Otherwise it is a forlorn, lonesome place. Anyway, the Chakma meat-seller refused. Sonameah kicked the pig meat and abused him. It was a market day. The man promptly picked up a leg of ham and hit Sonameah in the face. All this was, however, ancient history, perhaps all of five years old.

The police chief himself drove the jeep from the station house called thana (the officer in charge was absent on tour), to his house. We dined together and he gave up his bedroom for me to sleep in. He told me I was under protective custody and that to ensure that the enraged mob did no harm to the family he had posted a police guard at the Rajbari. I thanked him but told him it was unnecessary. We could look after ourselves.

The next morning, on the way to the court of the sub-divisional magistrate Sobhan, we had to pass the deputy commissioner's bungalow. Colonel Hume came out to enquire where I was going. "To the court," I said. He wanted me to discuss the case over a cup of coffee on my return. Although he was courting my sister Amiti our relationship in official matters was strictly correct, for we were both too proud to do otherwise. On the personal level we were friendly and played soccer together and occasional games of bridge but even then we maintained a degree of reserve.

Sobhan sat in court. I was ushered in. He gave me a chair to sit on. I wanted to smoke and he gave the okay. So I smoked a cigarette in an effort to control my sense of outrage and humiliation. Sobhan asked my cousins and my bench clerk (who was in my court room at the time of the shooting but was supposed to have opened fire on the mob too), if they wanted to be enlarged on bail. They replied in the affirmative. He then asked me the same question. I quickly said, "no," because I did not want any favours from the hypocrite. Let him do his worst.

There was a hum of sudden conversation outside his courtroom and a low murmur at this unexpected turn of events. My greatuncle, the venerable Kumar Ramani Mohan Roy, in his white hair and moustache and dressed in white as usual, was the father of the arrested accused cousins. He and a few others were allowed in and they tried to persuade me to change my mind. I did not, so Sobhan ordered all of us to be remanded in custody. Due to my "rank and status" he placed me in Class I as an undertrial prisoner. They had no class-I accommodation in the jail, so they converted the Ladies' Section into a class-I jail for my benefit. There were no female under-trial prisoners or convicts in the jail at the time either. They made special efforts and provided a bed with a mosquito net, and a thunderbox et al, and generally fussed around to make me feel like an honoured guest.

A lot of tension between hillmen and plainsmen and a number of unsavoury incidents all over the Tracts ensued. Due to governmental pressure and my Kakku's

eloquent pleadings that my family and my people needed me, I agreed after some days in jail, to go back home.

The provincial Governor whom I went to see in Dhaka asked me if I wanted him to drop all cases against me. "No, I'm not guilty, so what have I to fear," I said. "Let the trial take place." Looking back, I think I must have sounded like a pompous ass, but he was rather impressed and said, "I wish we had more like you in Pakistan, Raja Sahib." This was from Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, a colleague of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, so I felt elated.

However, the government did not want to put me on trial. For political reasons the government worked out a compromise formula – I had to fight every inch of the way in arriving at a mutually acceptable solution. All cases between both parties were quashed. The government had intended to put my cousins on trial but I refused to let them be tried without me so all the cases were dropped. I was persuaded to express regret and to pay a few thousand rupees compensation to those who were hospitalized with gunshot wounds. The girl's father was given compensation and made to agree to his daughter's marriage to Mukhtar Hussain, thus vindicating tribal law and ensuring that without a father's consent, a girl cannot marry by eloping once.

The details were worked out with Mahmud Hassan Shah, the first Pakistani Deputy Commissioner posted to the Tracts. The first private High School that was set up in Rangamati was named after him. M.H. Shah was a Punjabi and belonged to the CSP (Civil Service of Pakistan, the elite of the bureaucracy). His superior, I.A.Khan, the Home Secretary of East Pakistan Government, was also a CSP officer and from West Pakistan. They had some knowledge and awareness of the special value of tradition and honour in feudal and indigenous people's culture. In the North West Frontier Province as a whole but especially in the Tribal Areas people shoot each other at the drop of a hat, particularly if there is any infringement of Pakhtunkhwa, their code of honour based on the three 'Zs' – zar (money/gold), zan (woman) and zamin (land).

A news item that illustrates the attitude of the people in the Tribal Areas in Pakistan appeared in the daily newspaper "The News, dated 6 September 2001." It says: "FC subedar killed by tribals over marriage dispute by Amir Mohammad Khan, Peshawar: The Kokikhel Afridi tribesmen allegedly killed a Frontier Constabulary (FC) subedar in the wee hours on Wednesday after keeping him in detention for three days over the elopement of a girl with his son at Jamrud tehsil, about 20 kilometres from here.

The Kokikhels killed subedar Aftab Ali, a Mehsud tribesman and resident of Shakas near Bara Road, following exertion of pressure by FC personnel for his unconditional release, a reliable source said. He had been taken hostage on Monday after the end of the Kokikhels' deadline for the surrender of the couple, it added.

A Kokikhel tribesman said the daughter of Muhammad Alam, a Kokikhel tribesman, ran away with Farman Ali, son of Aftab Ali, on August 31. To punish the couple according to tribal tradition, the Kokikhels gave a three-day deadline for the production of the absconders. But the lovebirds, the source said, were not produced and the subedar was detained.

The political administration and the FC officials negotiated with the Kokikhel tribesmen till 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday to peacefully settle the issue and recover the kidnapped official unconditionally. The tribesmen, however, refused to budge and insisted that in return for the official some relative of the hostage should be handed over to them as a surety for the ultimate surrender of the couple.

A tribesman Jamal Afridi said the people killed the subedar in desperation in view of the FC major Zahoor's assertion for the unconditional release and his threat of an operation in case of his continued detention. Both the couple now has to face the music for violating the tribal tradition, he added. 'This is in accordance with the customs and tradition of the area,' he said.

The FC has asked the tribe to explain its act by Friday. The body of the official was handed over to the FC authorities."

M.H. Shah's wife Sadiqa was strikingly attractive. In the Tracts for a long time she was remembered for her beauty. Occasionally I would invite them to a whist drive with about ten tables. We played this oldfashioned card game with small prizes for the winners. It was great fun and predated the more sophisticated bridge. Even then in Rangamati sometimes we played auction and even the incipient contract bridge. Culbertson was in vogue. Goren had not made his appearance just then amongst us, not to speak of the plethora of experts and their expertise to help confound confusion to a state of bewildering perplexity. Leaving aside competitions, even relaxing rubber or Chicago bridge often takes the form of a battle of nerves. But then that is the charm of bridge – an amalgam of form and substance, intellect and skill, memory and flair.

On 14 August 1953, Independence Day, I was granted an honorary commission in the Pakistan Land Forces and was also made Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General, the only one from East Pakistan ever to receive this dual distinction. In fact during the whole existence of East Pakistan no one else was made an honorary ADC to the Governor General or President. This had been decided upon before the firing incident on the recommendation of Sir Firoz Khan Noon, I later learned. Yet coming as it did, shortly after, the hillmen felt honoured and their self-esteem received a boost. Some of the plainsmen, especially some government officials, looked upon it with disfavour. Some had gleefully proclaimed that I would be deposed if not imprisoned and that the special tribal laws would be abrogated in favour of the "normal" laws of the country. None of these had eventuated, nor was I tried in court, and instead was heaped with honours by the Central Government of Pakistan.

The shooting took place on 27 July 1953 when I was twenty years old, and for the next seven years or so, on every 27 July, give or take a day, something or other unpalatable came my way. Were they in expiation of some of my remembered or unremembered negative Karma?

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CHAPTER XXIV

Kamini Mohan Dewan

East Pakistan was going to have elections to the provincial legislature for the first time in 1954. The government decided to let the Tracts also send representatives to the provincial legislature. Constitutionally this could not be done because the Tracts was a Wholly Excluded Area and outside the purview of central and provincial legislatures but nevertheless the government went through with their plan of aggrandizement under the smokescreen of granting people the benefits of democracy.

It meant that the provincial assembly could interfere in the affairs of the Hill Tracts. We were afraid that under the guise of democracy the government would take away the already attenuated safeguards the hillmen enjoyed, and the complicated and myriad rules and laws of the province would be made applicable to the Tracts. We were also apprehensive of an influx of plainsmen. Our objections, however, were overruled as the Bengali government conveniently preferred to consider us anti-democratic reactionaries. We knew that one or two members in a legislature manned by politicians who knew next to nothing about the Tracts and some of whom were intent on exploiting us could certainly not safeguard our interests. On the plea of democracy it would mean further exploitation by the plainsmen. And that is precisely what happened.

The Hill Tracts police was a separate police force recruited from within the Tracts and under the direct control of the Deputy Commissioner, or the Superintendant, from 1860 on. Now, it was disbanded and the Bengali provincial police took over. Law and rules meant for the more sophisticated or more complex plainsmen were introduced in the Tracts. Business and commerce and government jobs went to the plainsmen. Our safeguards were progressively whittled away and our people's miseries and poverty increased, along with a multiplying number of corrupt and arrogant bureaucrats.

Our desire to keep out of provincial politics was not respected and two seats were allotted to Hill Tracts. Elections were to be held on separate electorate basis, on religion. Though they comprised almost 80% of the indigenous population of the Tracts, the Buddhists were awarded one seat, and the Hindus, mainly Tripura hillmen, constituting a little more than half the remaining 20% were granted another.

For the Buddhist seat four contested: the veteran leader and President of the Hillpeople's Organization, Kamini Mohan Dewan, an uncle of mine Kumar Kokonadaksha Roy, nominee of the Hillmen's Association, my cousin Chiranjib, who was made to stand by his father and did not relish electioneering one bit, and Sushil Jiban Chakma, one of the few hillmen government officers. Sushil was an officer in the Agriculture Department and had recently returned from a course in the

United States. He resigned from government service and contested. As I was under age I could not contest and preferred to remain neutral.

Later, against my better judgment I allowed myself to be persuaded to support my uncle. Having declared my support I campaigned for him and held many public meetings. He avoided holding public meetings, though when he did he spoke spiritedly and went down well with the audience. However, he had to be dragged to meetings and was disinclined to travel, because the rigours of life outside his cosy cloister at home were unpalatable to him. He was the first man in the Tracts to hold a Master's Degree (from Calcutta University) and one of the founders of the Hillmen's Association before the partition of India. Since then, however, he had retired from public life and lived like a recluse and hardly stirred out of his home.

In all the public meetings none of the candidates or their supporters maligned each other, nor did they play dirty. It was clean campaigning. For me this meant journeying over mountains and valleys on foot, by elephant and by dugout canoe. It was an altogether invigorating experience. It also widened my horizon and permitted me to get to know the people all over the Tracts, their leaders and their problems at firsthand. All the candidates had basically the same objective – autonomy for the Hill Tracts, for the preservation of our cultural and ethnic identity, and for emancipation from the exploitation of the plainsmen. Through sheer inertia my uncle lost to Kamini Mohan Dewan by a narrow margin of less than two hundred votes.

The elderly Kamini Babu, born on 8 March 1890, was the son of the Dhamai goza leader Trilochan Dewan who in the 19th Century had managed the Chittagong Estates of the minor Raja Bhuvan Mohan. He had been a student leader from my grandfather's time, and had been in politics ever since. Kamini Babu was always dressed in a white dhoti and white Punjabi (kurta), and sometimes he wore a black coat (jacket not overcoat). He was tall, slim, fair with a noble leonine face and a mane of white hair, bushy eyebrows and a luxuriant moustache. Although he had political differences with the Rajas from my grandfather's time, he and I got on fine. When his wife Surabala Dewan died, I went to his home in Baradam to attend the Sradh ceremonies, in March 1952. He received me with all due honour, just as he would have my father or grandfather. He believed in constitutional monarchy, that is the three chiefs should be heads of their territories but executive authority would vest in an elected council (parliament). His dream was an autonomous Hill Tracts too, only the form was at variance with the Chiefs', in some details. He was a great friend of my grandfather-in-law Chandra Mohan Dewan. They would both come over and visit us sometimes in the mid-1950s and the two with Arati and I, and occasionally cousin Chiranjib (Babluda), would play monopoly together. The two elderly guests enjoyed the game and we had fun playing together.

In 1964 when I was in New York for the UN General Assembly Session I sent instructions for the annual Punyah Durbar to be held as usual. Rani Arati would preside in my place and I asked that Devasish, my son and heir then about five years old, should be installed as the heir-apparent (Yuvaraj). A proclamation was read out,

then the Rani presented my sword to Kamini Babu, who, on behalf of the people presented the sword to Devasish who was thus installed as the Yuvaraj. The Punyah ceremony, including the installation of the Yuvaraj, I understand, was performed solemnly in the Durbar and everything went off with due dignity and grace. Kamini Mohan Dewan, who from Raja Bhuvan's time had been recognized as the people's leader in the Hill Tracts and occupied a position immediately after the Chiefs, was then in his 70s. The revered leader died on 15-1-1976, almost 86 years of age.

Some months after the 1954 elections, the Hindu member Birendra Kishore Tripura, who lived near Khagrachari in the north came to see me. Just before the elections he had changed his name from Roaza to Tripura so as to appear more egalitarian. He was a graduate and a former teacher and was respected in the locality for being well intentioned. Birendra had narrowly won against Nakul Tripura, also a teacher, a good man and an idealist. After complaining about shenanigans and their helplessness in the legislature in the present set-up, he said, "Let us revolt." He thought it was futile to attempt to gain autonomy for the Hill Tracts through the provincial legislature. "There is no way out", he repeated. "We must fight, we must go in for sabotage."

I recalled the first press conference I had held in Dhaka, in 1952, when I had categorically stated that the Hill Tracts wants direct central administration, for that ensured the greatest measure of protection against the more advanced plainsmen. Now, while the assembly member was relating the Bengali administration's oppressive measures and their connivance with their fellow plainsmen in infiltrating the Tracts and by fraud depriving the hillpeople of their lands, I was reminded of a lunch at Government House in Dhaka in 1953.

The Governor, Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon and I were lunching on the lawn on a balmy winter's day, with a restful view of greenery interspersed with beds of cannas and further on roses. There was no one else at the table. Until the appearance of Bengali Governors, whenever I went to Dhaka and wanted to call on the governor, I was invariably invited to a tete-a-tete lunch or dinner. When Bengali governors took over I was only granted an interview or if invited to dinner it was because I happened to be in Dhaka and the dinner was being held for some other reason.

The other two Rajas seldom went to Dhaka unless I dragged them out to jointly represent some of the pressing problems of the Tracts. This has been traditional. Even in grandfather's time the other two used to tell him, "Do as you think best. We're behind you," but preferred not to stir out of their domain. When I read some of the old correspondence and files I thought I knew why my ancestors were shortlived. They had to battle alone.

When I related to Sir Firoz the state of affairs in the Tracts and the mounting exploitation, he looked concerned. After a short silence he said, "Can you start some trouble there, Raja Sahib?" He sipped his coffee and gazed at the beds of flamboyant cannas in their prim rectangular beds on the lawn. "Start some trouble and sustain it

for a while. I can then tell the Central Government that direct administration is necessary."

I wished we could. The people were disunited and congenitally averse to violence. The British had systematically discouraged the hillpeople from joining the armed forces. I knew the younger generation would go along with it, but to organize an armed revolution and a disciplined force of guerrillas was not possible without the administration knowing about it and stamping it out before it began. The time was not ripe. And by the time we did start something well and truly, the governor would have been transferred in any case.

On my return to Rangamati I discussed the possibilities of organizing and starting a guerrilla movement with some of my closest advisers. The idea appealed to me for three reasons. Firstly, I was convinced that whatever government came to power in East Pakistan in the foreseeable future, it would continue to Bengalise the Tracts until we were a small minority in our own homeland and they would do all in their power to assimilate if not annihilate our ethnic and cultural identity. Secondly, I was convinced that merely asking for our rights would be like the lamb petitioning a hungry wolf for justice and fair play. The third reason was that history showed that a people had to wrest their rights from the oppressors, they never got it for the asking.

My advisers, however, dissuaded me from embarking on a plan of action, which they felt was doomed to failure. They said even if we could start guerrilla warfare we would not be able to sustain it because the motivation was yet not strong enough. They agreed that ultimately we would have to adopt this course but at the time it was premature and would do more harm to the cause than good. So I continued to fight constitutionally. Some of the local government officials feared my outspokenness and my direct attacks in defence of my people. As a result, whatever respect they had for me was not unmixed with dislike. However, to clear any misapprehension it must be said that my relationship with the vast majority of officers as well as with plainsmen in general was cordial and reciprocal. Our fight was with the policies of government, not with the Bengalis as individuals.

With all this wafting about in my mind, I listened to Birendra's recital of impractical schemes. He was good-hearted but long-winded. At last he stopped. Suspecting that he was merely prepared to talk but not take any practical steps in starting the agitation against the government, I asked him: "Can you start with cutting the telegraph wires in your region?" He kept silent.

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CHAPTER XXV

Hunting and Shooting

My introduction to hunting and shooting was at an early age and my first victim was a dove. It was in the back garden and I shot it with my airgun from the south veranda upstairs. After the airgun days, my first use of the 12-bore shotgun (a B.S.A. or the Holland and Holland Paradox) was on the last day of one of the annual Mayani tours with father. I was perhaps 13. We were floating down the Kassalong in country boats when one morning someone spied some wild fowl on the bank. Father thought I was too young to use the shotgun but I persuaded him to let me make a beginning. When I pulled the trigger I felt the recoil, more than I had anticipated, but did not admit it lest I be forbidden future use of the gun. Of course, I was wide of the target. The boat was on the move and so were the chickens, and I was over excited.

I bagged my first barking deer some years later in a *ranya* about four miles from home. Rasik Mohan Dewan, who was the husband of father's first cousin Nilanalini, accompanied me. He had served as a Police Officer in the CHT Police Force before resigning and joining the Chakma Raj Office. He had served grandfather and father before me also as Bench Clerk and senior officer. It was he who had been falsely incriminated in the firing case in 1953 and was sent to jail as an under-trial prisoner. It was not yet dark though the sun had set. The deer was moving about, nibbling at bits and pieces in the old jum not too far from the village of the Tangchangyas in Rangamati mauza. I was so excited that I wanted to shoot at sight but my mentor wanted me to skulk through the jungle and get closer. It was not a clean shot and the quarry vanished. The Dewan, however, was an expert and when he inspected the blood spattered leaves he said a vital organ had been hit and we would get it. As it was getting dark we decided not to pursue the search. The villagers brought the deer the next morning. It was a female and if the first victim is a female the *shikari* is supposed to be lucky in future. It was of course in open season and did not carry any young.

Syed Afzal Agha, Deputy Commissioner of the Hill Tracts in 1957 and 1958, was a keen shikari with whom I had gone on a deer hunt earlier. He was also an aficionado of golf and bridge. It was a Sunday afternoon in the autumn of 1957. He had invited me over to his bungalow for a few rubbers of bridge. While we were engrossed in the game Jogendra Kumar Dewan (Jugya Aju) was shown in. He was the headman of Rangapani Mauza, wherein is situated the Hill Tracts Headquarters. "Headquarters" reminded me more of a general on the battlefield and tents rather than a fixed civilian establishment. He informed us that a cow had been killed nearby and asked if we would be interested in the tiger. Agha and I concurred heartily. Jogendra Dewan went off to supervise the building of a *machan*. The spot would turn out to be my future headquarters (the English official term for the district and the

three capitals – Rangamati, Banderban and Manikcheri) after abandoning the old capital because of the Kaptai Dam.

At dusk we got on to the *machan* and waited. Jugya Aju sat behind us. It was agreed that when we were certain that the tiger had come to his kill we would nudge each other and at a given signal Aju would shine the flashlight. Precisely when the feasting had begun none of us knew. Only when we heard the unmistakable sound of crunching bone did we realize the predator's presence. Aju shone the light and Agha and I fired. The leopard, or panther, (many consider it as the rose by any other name) collapsed on his meal literally like a deflated toy. The animal had two bullet holes – we had used 12 bore shotguns with ball cartridge – one in the heart and the other in the head. I restrained Agha from firing any more so as not to spoil the coat.

In early 1958 Agha, his wife Fidya and their two children Shireen and Imran joined us on a family visit to my in-laws' home at Bhusanbagh, about 40 miles up the Karnafuli, above the rapids at Barkal where the trolley line laid during the Lushai Expedition was still used to transport goods. After two days the Aghas returned to Rangamati. An hour after they had departed a villager came to inform us that one of his cows had been killed by a tiger, about two miles upstream almost on the river bank. Due to Agha's interest, we had asked for bait to be tethered at various places but no tiger had been tempted during the last two or three days.

Hurriedly a *machan* was built. It was high up on a tree and quite far from the kill as we discovered later. An old shikari, a relative who was father's close friend, the same Jugya Aju and I sat on the *machan* with a couple of shotguns and a lot of LG (large game) shots. We had not brought ball cartridges, nor any rifles from Rangamati as I was not on a hunting trip. It grew dark and the stars twinkled through the foliage above. The sound of crickets and croakers and the occasional howl of jackals mingled with the growing tension. We kept a hypnotic watch on the kill. Will he come or will he not? Night was now fully upon us, yet the kill stood out as a darker shadow, a blob of darkness. Suddenly I noticed a wisp of movement on it, in the interplay of shades and shadows in silhouette. We had decided not to use the small two-battery flashlight, so we whispered, "One, two, three" and both of us pulled our triggers. There was a terrifying growl from the tiger and a thrashing and jumping around and repeated cries and growls. We carried on banging away at the sound. I fired about seven times and Aju four, until there was silence.

After an interval people came in boats with bamboo torches and hurricane lanterns. They threw stones at the place and finally some young brave ventured forward with the hill knife '*tagal*'. They found him. He was dead. From the tip of nose to the end of his tail he was just short of ten feet. A few inches more and he would have qualified as a "Royal Bengal" Tiger. Tiger fat is a prized possession and tiger whiskers too. The first is used for curing rheumatism and aches and pains. I cannot remember well the use for the latter but I think it was an aphrodisiac and needed also for love charms. I did taste the tiger flesh; it was spiced and my recollection places its taste close to that of beef. It was my first and last tiger. We put

alum and salt and kept the skin in the shade but by the time it reached Pereira at Patherghat in Chittagong it had deteriorated somewhat. The amateur taxidermist did the best he could and the mounted tiger remained with us for many years. However, some time later the head got detached and the skin looked somewhat like a strange species of butterfly.

Some years later, when at an organized beat in Ghagra, some twelve miles from home, I shot a deer in chase and saw it die at close range. I gave up killing from that day, at last viewing such sport as senseless cruelty. After that only once, in January 1973, I deviated from the path.

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Raja Tridiv Roy: With the Tiger he shot in 1957 at Bhusanbagh,Barkal (Chittagong Hill Tracts)

CHAPTER XXVI

Incarcerating Opponents

The Pakistan Resolution moved by the Premier of Bengal, Sher-e-Bangla A.K.M. Fazlul Huq, at the Lahore session of the All India Muslim League in March 1940 called for the creation of two Muslim States in the subcontinent, in the northwest and in the northeast. At a subsequent session of the League Legislators' convention held at Delhi from 7-9 April 1946, another Premier of Bengal, this time the redoubtable H. S. Suhrawardy, moved a resolution for a single Pakistan. The resolution was adopted. If any Bengali members were against the idea they did not voice their views. (Perhaps the most formidable politician of East Pakistan was A.K. Fazlul Huq who had a Masters degree in mathematics besides being an astute lawyer and charismatic politician. He was born in 1873, three years before the Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and died in 1962. He became Chief Minister of East Pakistan in April 1954 and was dismissed by Iskandar Mirza on 30 May 1954, less than two months later. In 1955 he became Pakistan's Interior Minister and in March 1956 Governor of East Pakistan. After 13 months as Prime Minister of Pakistan Suhrawardy lost his post. However, Fazlul Huq carried on as Governor until 31 March 1958 six months after Suhrawardy's fall when he was dismissed by Iskandar Mirza. At the age of 85 he became the President of the Krishak Sramik Party (KSP) again. Four years after he left Government House Fazlul Huq died in a hospital in Dhaka. He was buried in the grounds of the Dhaka High Court beside two of his rivals Nazimuddin and Suhrawardy. It is Fazlul Huq who is called *Sher-e-Bangla* or the Tiger of Bengal.)

Jinnah, born on or around Christmas Day 1876 in Karachi, then a "sleepy fishing village," attended the English section of Sindh Madrassa-tul-Islam in Karachi. Sindh then was a part of the Bombay Presidency and not a separate province. He studied upto class IV then got married at the age of 16, before going to England where he worked as an apprentice with Doughlas Graham and Company. He gave up bookkeeping and took admission for bar studies. In 1896, at the age of 20, he was called to the bar from Lincoln's Inn, London, the youngest Indian barrister. When Jinnah returned to Karachi the same year, his wife and mother had both died. He also found that there was no scope for him in his father's business, so he went to Bombay and set up practice there. On 13 October 1930 he left for England and in June 1931 he decided to settle there. However, on 24 October 1935, he returned to India and lived almost all of his political life in Bombay, moving to Karachi only in August 1947 on the creation of Pakistan.

In August 1947, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's "moth-eaten, truncated" Pakistan came into being, the eastern part bearing the name "East Bengal," and separated from the other "wing," by about a thousand miles of India. It was like the continental US and Alaska with the intervening territory that is Canada being instead the USSR, or to put it in a more modern day framework, the Russian

Federation. The Alaska analogy holds good, apart from the aspect of being territorially the smaller, in that like the Inuits vis-à-vis the Caucasians, the Bengalis were from a different racial and cultural group. The asymmetry was that the smaller area, East Bengal, had the larger population.

Perhaps Pakistan was the only country in the world where the majority of the population inhabited the territorially smaller segment that was also the weaker in terms of infrastructure, power, wealth and authority. The almost only thing common between the Bengali people of the Eastern "wing" and those of their compatriots in the other "wing" was the religion of Islam. It is something like uniting Burma with Sri Lanka because the majority of the people are Buddhist, India and Nepal because they are Hindu, or France with Greece because they are Christian. But there is an important criterion missing in the analogies. In the case of the two wings, they voluntarily and enthusiastically wanted to link their destinies in one ideological state - Pakistan, and did not wish to remain a part of India, whereas in the set of parallels, the people of each of the countries, especially the smaller of each pair, have shown no desire for union with the bigger.

The basis for the creation of the State of Pakistan was the Muslim League's adamantine stand, that the Hindus and the Muslims were separate nations and that the Muslims would not get a fair deal from the majority Hindus in an undivided India. Therefore, in order to be able to live in honour and dignity and to preserve their culture they had to have their homeland, Pakistan. The British and the then Congress politicians acquiesced and Pakistan came into being through the division of India in August 1947.

Three other important factors need to be noted. One, most of the Muslim religious parties in India had opposed the creation of Pakistan and intensely disapproved of many of its leaders, including Jinnah whom they considered a Kafir (a heretic or non-believer). Two, Jinnah, a Gujarati Shia and a western educated liberal barrister, after achieving Pakistan, declared that the State was to be a non-religious democratic one. On 11 August 1947, in his address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, he categorically declared that all citizens of Pakistan were equal, that they were free to go to their temples and their mosques and that the religion of a citizen was not the business of the state.

The third notable factor was that most of the Muslims of India remained on, despite horrific Hindu-Muslim-Sikh communal frenzies that caused the death and dislocation of millions leading up to August 1947 and the period immediately after. Some historians say 8 million refugees came to Pakistan and 6 million went to India. The chaotic and brutal manner of the transfer of populations was a human tragedy of gargantuan proportions accompanied by unparalleled violence and bloodshed.

Ian Talbot, in 'Pakistan A Modern History', writes, "By December 1947 Sind had only resettled 244,000 displaced persons, while West Punjab had resettled over 4 million. Its government that month agreed to take another 500,000 refugees

provided that they were relocated in the Sukkur, Shikarpur and Mirpurkhas districts as Karachi was 'super-saturated'. Within a month Khuhro had reneged on his promise, declaring that Sind would be unable to rehabilitate more than 150,000 refugees during the first half of 1948. This 'uncooperative' attitude was criticized by the West Punjab Governor. In a letter to Jinnah early in 1948 he cited census figures to demonstrate that Sind had a net loss of 600,000 Hindu and Sikh agriculturists and therefore should have no difficulty in meeting its responsibilities".....

"Khuhro's stand on the refugee issue was a contributory factor in his eventual downfall. It was to exert a much wider negative impact on Pakistani politics, for it not only strengthened Sindhi sentiment against the center, but also encouraged the precedent of executive action against elected representatives. This boded ill for the future. The differing experiences of mohajirs from U.P. to those from East Punjab and Gujarat is of crucial importance to an understanding of post-independence political developments. Linked with this is their self-image that they had sacrificed for Pakistan and were engaged on a true hijrat rather than being 'acute' migrants. The mohajirs from U.P. were in fact just a minority of the refugees who had left India at the time of partition. Three quarters of all mohajirs were Punjabis (4.7 million). They were able to settle quickly in Pakistan and rapidly abandon the mohajir label. They did not have to make the linguistic and social adjustments which usually face refugees because they spoke the Punjabi language of the indigenous West Punjab population and entered an environment which was both climatically and culturally similar to that of their natal East Punjab villages. They settled on land vacated by the Sikh Jats and were thus enabled to continue their traditional agricultural pursuits.

A close reading of the British Deputy High Commissioner's reports for East Bengal during 1948 immediately dispels the view that problems were non-existent in this region. In addition to surges of Hindu migration despite repeated reassurances to the minorities, there were serious tensions between the West Bengal and East Bengal governments. Sporadic armed clashes erupted in the riveraine area between Rajshahi and Murshidabad throughout October and November 1948, and the Pakistan border with Tripura was another flashpoint area. About 700,000 refugees came to East Bengal, two thirds of them from West Bengal and Assam. The rest were Urdu speaking migrants from Bihar and U.P. About an equal number of Hindus migrated to West Bengal and Assam."

The leader of the Indian freedom movement and the best known, and revered by many, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, universally known as Mahatma Gandhi, was shot dead by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu fanatic on 30 January 1948 for being considered too soft on the Muslims. In keeping with the adage that "too much of anything is bad", when informed of Gandhi's assassination and on being asked for his comments, George Bernard Shaw said, "It is dangerous to be too good."

Again Talbot says, "A precedent for the dismissal of elected governments was also established, when the governors of the Frontier and Sind dismissed the ministries of Dr. Khan Sahib and M. A. Khuhro on 22 August 1947 and 26 April

1948 under Jinnah's express directions. Nevertheless it could be argued that despite his immense prestige as Pakistan's founding father Jinnah never exceeded the limits of his authority as Governor-General laid down by the India Independence Act."

"Khuhro's fears of native Sindhis being swamped to the point of becoming a minority in their own province were not altogether without basis. In Pakistan's first census of 1951, refugees accounted for 57% of Karachi's population and 65% of Sindh's second largest city Hyderabad. The refugees made 46% of Lahore's population, 40% of Rawalpindi's, 70% of Faisalabad's, 44% of Sahiwal's, and 12% of Peshawar's. They were generally more educated and modern than the indigenous population. However, in the Punjab assimilation was easy as they were the same people in race, language and culture."

For some understanding of Sindh and Sindhi politics one would do well to read Hamida Khuhro's eminently well-researched book on her father, "Mohammed Ayub Khuhro, A life of courage in politics," whom people called the "Iron Man" of Sindh.

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An important bit of interaction between Gracey and Auchinleck who was Supreme Commander of the Indian and Pakistan Armed Forces until 30 November 1948, in connection with Kashmir is of particular interest. Wolpert writes in "Jinnah of Pakistan": "On October 27 as soon as Governor-General Jinnah learned of India's airlift to Srinagar, he ordered his 'acting' British commander-in-chief (General Messervy was on leave), General Sir Douglas Gracey, to "move two brigades of the Pak army into Kashmir.... one from Rawalpidi and another from Sialkot. The Sialkot army was to march to Jammu, take the city and make the Maharaja a prisoner. The Rawalpindi column was to advance to Srinagar and capture the city. Such strategic action could have secured Kashmir for Pakistan while saving Srinagar from 'tribal anarchy.' General Gracey refused, however, to accept those orders from his governor-general, informing Jinnah that 'he was not prepared to issue instructions which would inevitably lead to armed conflict between the two Dominions and the withdrawal of British Officers, without the approval of the Supreme Commander' (Field Marshal Auchinleck).

Having just flown in from Karachi, Jinnah was in Lahore at this time and stayed with Mudie, who was 'most aggressive and abusive' to Gracey over the phone, wanting to know 'Why the hell Gracey was not carrying out Jinnah's orders. What had it got to do with the Supreme Commander? What did it matter if the British Officers were withdrawn? Could he not send the troops on without British Officers? Jinnah insisted on the orders being issued at once.' Gracey informed Auchinleck the next day that he thought 'Mudie had been drinking,' and Mountbatten added in his report of this unpleasant incident to the King, that Sir Francis had apparently 'lived up to his reputation.' General Gracey informed Field Marshal Auchinleck from Rawalpindi by phone at 1:00 A.M. on October 27-28 that he had 'received orders from Jinnah which if obeyed would entail issue "Stand Down" order,' Auchinleck

wired his chiefs of staff in London on October 28. A "stand down" order meant the automatic withdrawal of all British officers from a dominion army.

The 'Auk' flew into Lahore from Delhi that fateful morning of October 28 and was met at the airport by Gracey, who stated that the orders Gracey had not obeyed were nonetheless issued to Pakistani troops 'to seize Baramula and Srinagar also Banihal Pass and to send troops into Mirpur district of Jammu.'

While Jinnah was still alive, the first war with India, in Kashmir, was fought in 1948. Both the countries had British commanders-in-chief of their respective armed forces under one supreme commander Field Marshal Auchinleck, based in Delhi. Jinnah died on 11 September 1948. Khwaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali and the grandson of the Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka who had presided over the first session of the newly created Muslim League in Dhaka in December 1906, succeeded him as Governor General, for three years.

Defence Secretary Iskander (a variation of Sikander which corresponds to Alexander) Mirza and the army c-in-c General Sir Doughlas Gracey recommended Major General Iftikhar Ali Khan of Probyn's Horse to succeed Gracey as the c-in-c. (The inimitable Brigadier Maqsood Ali Khan Baig, universally and fondly known as Hesky and who was the first to win the sword of honour at the Dehra Doon Military Academy, was a close friend of British royalty and many years best known polo champion of Pakistan. He belonged to this illustrious cavalry regiment, which he subsequently commanded. For three years running he led the Duke of Edinburgh's team to victory in the European Polo Championship).

This was done after intensive examination of all possible candidates. On his way to London for a final grooming at the Imperial College, his plane crashed, at Jungshahi, 45 miles from Karachi, on 13 December 1949, and he along with the next in line Brigadier Sher Mohammad Khan died. Not only were these two the best but there was a big gap between them and the next lot of officers. Humayun Mirza, in "Plassey to Pakistan" says, "There was a period of intrigue and politicking among the remaining generals." Adjutant-General Ayub Khan was appointed as commander-in-chief of the Army on 6-9-1950. His tenure was subsequently extended from 17-8-1953 to 16-1-1959.

Shortly after, there was the Rawalpindi conspiracy to assassinate Liaquat and take over the government. Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan confronted Major General Akbar Khan, the leader of the conspiracy, in Bannu where he was serving, but he denied any knowledge of it. However, subsequently he was arrested from his home in Rawalpindi where documents were found relating to the conspiracy. General Akbar, who had played a leading role in the war in Kashmir in 1948, was tried in a special court and while the majority was acquitted, Akbar Khan and a few others were sentenced to some years in jail. Later, due to a lacuna in the law the conviction was considered null and void and Akbar Khan and the others were released.

On 16 October 1951, the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated at a public meeting in Rawalpindi by Said Akbar, a former intelligence agent, who in turn was shot dead. Soon after, the Finance Minister Ghulam Mohammad, a wily and ambitious bureaucrat turned politician manoeuvred the ingenuous Governor General Khwaja Nazimuddin into becoming Prime Minister, while he made himself Governor General. The daily "Dawn" of 21 October 1951 says: "Exactly at 4:05 pm on October 19, 31 guns rolled in salute for proclaiming the assumption of office by the new Governor General of Pakistan, Ghulam Mohammad ..... His Excellency Ghulam Mohammad, leaning on the arms of his Assistant Private Secretary, and escorted by his ADCs arrived in the Hall in a procession at 4 pm. He wore a black sherwani, black Jinnah Cap and ankle-tight white pyjama (churidar). Later in the evening in a broadcast to the nation he said 'Liaquat Ali Khan lived and died so that Pakistan should live. Such a death suffered in the service of the nation is not death but a conquest of death ....."

In early 1953 the anti Quadiani movement began. Humayun Mirza writes, "The mullahs formed a body called Majlis-i-Amal and directed their fire against the Quadiani or Ahmaddiyah community, claiming that they were not Muslims. Nazimuddin turned a blind eye to their hysteria and allowed their agitation to spread unchecked throughout the Punjab and infiltrate the capital, Karachi itself. But when they demanded the removal of Sir Zafrullah Khan, Pakistan's able Foreign Minister, Defence Secretary Iskander Mirza, in a top secret letter to the Prime Minister, warned against further inaction.....

"Iskander Mirza alerted the Minister of Interior, Nawab Gurmani, and together they went to warn the Prime Minister. Nazimuddin summoned his cabinet. After some discussions they called Mirza, who said, 'If you do not take action instantly it will be too late.' The Prime Minister passed the necessary order. The next morning when the people came out to demonstrate they found the army and the police waiting to receive them. They fell back and the planned demonstrations collapsed."

"However, the situation in Lahore got worse. The Prime Minister decided to call a cabinet meeting and also invite Mirza to give his appreciation of the situation. During the meeting Governor I.I. Chundrigar rang to say that the Chief Minister, Mumtaz Daultana, was in his office and wished to speak to the Prime Minister. He repeated Daultana's message which was 'we have lost all control. Either you give in to the Majlis-i-Amal immediately, or the whole of Lahore will be burnt down.' He asked for suggestions. Nobody said a word. Then the Prime minister asked Mirza for his opinion..... Mirza went to the Military Intelligence office and spoke on the special scrambler telephone to the Commanding Officer at Lahore, Major General Azam Khan, who acted swiftly. Control was restored within hours "and prominent mullahs were taken into custody." A certain amount of unrest followed, and Azam started sending telegrams to Iskander Mirza with copies to the Prime Minister regarding shooting of law breakers.

"Up to now the Prime Minister was relatively calm, but upon seeing these telegrams he lost his nerve. He moaned: 'Colonel, I cannot sleep. The Army is killing these men of God.... And I cannot sleep.' Iskander Mirza again telephoned General Azam. 'You idiot, if you have to shoot mullahs, why do you have to advertise that you are shooting them.' Azam asked: 'What shall I call them then, Sir?' Iskander Mirza asked him to use the term "miscreants." The formula was henceforward used, allowing Nazimuddin to calm down. The incident exemplifies the total reliance of the politicians of the day on Iskander Mirza in difficult situations, thus propelling him into the limelight and earning him 'the strong man of Pakistan' image.

"Military occupation of Lahore took place on March 6 1953 but this did not prevent Daultana from intriguing with the mullahs. Thus he was replaced as Chief Minister of Punjab by Malik Firoz Khan Noon, an experienced public servant." The Quadiani issue seemed to have disappeared for a good many years, then it simmered for a while before being resuscitated. Finally on 7-9-1974, during the time of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the National Assembly voted the Quadianis as being outside the pale of Islam.

"On 17 April 1953 Ghulam Mohammad dismissed Nazimuddin although only a few days earlier the Prime Minister had had his majority confirmed in Parliament. On 24 October 1954, Ghulam Mohammad dismissed the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly President, Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan, another Bengali, took the matter to court. Chief Justice Munir of the Supreme Court approved and legitimized Ghulam Mohammad's coup, citing the doctrine of necessity.

"Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bogra was strongly in favour of Ayub retiring when his term ended in January 1955. Through the efforts of the Defence Secretary Mirza, on 17 August 1953, Ayub got a four-year extension as Army Chief, up to 16 January 1959. It was an ominous decision that had far reaching repercussions on the history of democracy in Pakistan. And Ayub proved himself to be his benefactor Mirza's nemesis. Iskander Mirza retired from government service on 24 October 1954 and became a member of the Bogra cabinet."

Talbot comments on the goings on of the unholy triumvirate. He says, "More adverse criticism has however been directed at the wielding of executive authority by Ghulam Muhammad (Governor-General 19-10-1951 to 5-10-1955) and Islander Mirza (Governor-General 6-10-1955 to 22-3-1956 and President from 23-3-1956 to 27-3-1958). Indeed such writers as M.M. Syed attach the bulk of the responsibility for Pakistan's democratic failure to the 'misfortune' of having such 'seasoned bureaucrats' elevated to positions of authority. Both men certainly possessed profound anti-democratic instincts and by their dismissal of elected governments paved the way, in Mirza's case directly, for the military assumption of power."

"Allen McGrath has recently added Chief Justice Muhammad Munir to the rogues' gallery. He depicts Munir as possessing an authoritarian outlook, which he

had inculcated during the colonial era. This prompted him to provide legitimacy, on the ground of legal necessity, to Ghulam Muhammad's 24 October 1954 dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and to Ayub's later military rule. According to McGrath neither the people of Pakistan through their lack of education, nor their politicians through their alleged ill-discipline and corruption were to blame for the demise of Pakistan's democracy. The responsibility lay with Mirza, Ghulam Muhammad and Munir who provided a legal smokescreen for their authoritarian activities." In a footnote McGrath adds, " Ayub destroyed Iskander's papers and diaries, which helps to account for the absence of a serious study of his career. In Iskander's favour it may be said that he was neither a religious bigot nor corrupt. Unlike Ayub, he did not use public office to accumulate a personal fortune for his family members. See 'Memoirs of a President' I and II (previously unpublished interview of 23 September 1967 between Iskander and M.A. H. Ispahani), Newsline (May and June 1996)."

Today, there may be more Muslims in India than there are in Pakistan. In 1870 Italy annexed Rome and the Papal States and made Rome the Italian capital. Now there are more Catholics in Rome than in the Vatican. One cannot blame the Pope or the Holy See for that, can one? Immediately on partition, all the refugees from India were welcomed to the new country of Pakistan, but once the euphoria had abated, many of the locals began to resent the newcomers, especially those who were seen to have arrogated to themselves power and authority, aside from economic and other reasons, and those who happened not to belong to the same linguistic or cultural group. Consequently, the two-way migration between India and Pakistan was discouraged with the signing of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement.

G.M. Syed the leader of Sindh, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the most eminent freedom fighter from the NWFP known as the Frontier Gandhi, soon after the creation of Pakistan fell out of favour with the Pakistan government, and both were imprisoned. Incarcerating political opponents, most regrettably, has been a continuing feature of Pakistani politics ever since. The old as well as the contemporary provincial leaders are still looked upon as heroes in their respective provinces. They are thought of as victims of the Central Government's institutional hegemony because despite pious professions the Centre cannot tolerate provincial autonomy, and are ever usurping the provinces' right to even limited and constitutionally permitted self-rule. The apologists for Central Authority, on the other hand, feel that the autonomists are nothing but veiled secessionists.

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CHAPTER XXVII

Buddha Jayanti Celebrations

The full moon day of May 1956 marked the 2500th year of the passing away of the Buddha. We decided to commemorate the event in the Hill Tracts befittingly. I invited leading monks and laymen to a meeting to chalk out a programme. I set up a committee with Kakku, (Uncle Rai Bahadur) as the chairman to work out the details and collect voluntary donations. Erudite scholars of whatever religion and learned monks were invited to the Rajbari to participate in a symposium. Buddhism encourages analysis, examination, discussion and debate. Coercion in any form is anathema to a Buddhist. Elaborate arrangements were made to receive monks from all parts of the Tracts and from Chittagong and the rest of East Pakistan.

Eighty percent of the Buddhists of Pakistan are located in the Tracts and the response from all sections of the population was exuberant. However, I had to absent myself from the celebrations at home as I was away in Rangoon as a member of a two-man Pakistan delegation. Nevertheless, under the able supervision of Kakku, the Buddha Jayanti celebrations at the Rajbari were conducted with dignity and solemnity, and many monks and laity were fed and people were later entertained to Buddhist plays and musical recitals called *Shankirtan.*

At dinner at the army headquarters at Kurmitola, Dhaka one evening, the Chief Secretary of East Pakistan Faruqui had requested me to represent Pakistan at the forthcoming Buddha Jayanti celebrations in Rangoon. Like most young people I had a great desire to travel to distant lands. Though Burma was not exactly distant, it was a land of Buddhists and boasted the famed golden Shwedagon Pagoda. My maternal grandmother's family had a lot of business in Burma and one of them had also been an Advocate General of Burma. On my father's side, history has it that at one time Burma was divided into three Kingdoms, one of which was ruled by the Chakma King. So, in my mind, Burma had associations from the hoary to the recent past and was like a second home. Our southern Marmas are of Arakanese descent and their dress, custom, language and culture are about the same as the Burmese. I was therefore enthusiastic about the prospect of visiting this ancient land as a representative of the country, and agreed with thanks. The other delegate was Dr. S.M. Hossain, at one time Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University and Chairman of the Public Service Commission.

Delegates and monks assembled in Rangoon were put up at the Strand Hotel, the only good western style hotel in the city then. I tried the fruit called durian but could not relish either the taste or the smell. I suppose it is one of those edible gifts of nature for which one has either to acquire or inherit a taste. It is totally unlike a mango or an apple which one may or may not like but does not find repulsive. Along with the celebrations and, in fact, the most important aspect of it was the

simultaneous holding of the Sixth World Buddhist Council. The first council was held at the Vulture Peak Hill at Rajagriha, under the Presidency of the monk Kasyapa the Elder, shortly after the Buddha had passed away in Kusinagar on the full moon day in May 2500 years ago.

The *Tripitaka*, literally the three baskets, was being recited, discussed and revised by learned monks and lay scholars. The teachings of the Buddha are contained in this treatise – the *Vinaya* or rules of monastic life, the *Sutra* or the sayings of the Tathagata Buddha and *Abhidhamma*, the philosophy of the Dhamma. In China alone there are thousands of volumes of the Buddha's discourses and canonical commentaries. By the year 983 the Buddhists in China had printed the Tripitaka consisting of 5048 volumes with 130,000 pages. The Emperor of China sent a full set to the King of Korea, and a Buddhist monk took another set to Japan.

Dr. Hossain read out a speech on behalf of the government. I spoke extempore as the Buddhist representative from Pakistan. The celebrations included the receiving of saffron robes by 2500 young Burmese laity who had, in order to gain merit, volunteered to become monks for a limited period. It is customary for all Buddhists of the southern school, the Theravada, the old name of which is Hinayana, to don the robes of a monk and live in a monastery at least once in a lifetime as a *sramanera*.

In the Great Cave, where the symposium and celebrations were held, all these laymen, mostly young boys, received the saffron robes one afternoon. In fact there were more than a hundred in excess of the 2500 volunteers asked for by the Burmese Government. Prime Minister U Nu and other government leaders regularly attended the sessions and held dinners and lunches for the delegates, besides providing transport and escorts to every delegation. We also visited the famed Shwedagon, the golden dome and spire of which is one fifth solid gold and the rest covered with gold leaf. There are niches at various corners where people prayed. It is believed that if you pray at the corner meant for those born on your day of the week your prayers will be answered. I did pray at the corner meant for the Sunday born.

I have never been a regular or frequent imbiber of strong alcoholic beverages. While I did not drink during the day, in the evening I had nothing against a few pegs of Scotch occasionally and in company. My drinking habits since about the age of 21 have always been the same, until I gave up the stronger alcoholic drinks in 1973. Our young escort, U Aung, told me that though the government had put a ban for a week during the celebrations he could smuggle in some rum. He did, and one evening he and I had some rum and he took me to the Lido Club where we met some young ladies and danced. In those days discotheques had not come into existence but this "club" was the nearest equivalent. It was a smallish room and seemed smaller because it was overcrowded, and smoke filled. There were a lot of young people, casual, friendly.

The next day there was no official function until the evening. U Aung brought along a pleasant and attractive Anglo-Burmese girl. He brought his girl friend too – like me he was married but such details did not seem to bother him any more than they did me due to our oriental code of conduct, which has one set of standards for males and another set for females. We went to the Royal Lake and had an afternoon's outing. Amjad and Lilly Khan of the Royal Stationeries invited Dr. Hossain and me to dinner one evening and we met a number of Pakistanis then living in Rangoon. The hospitable and helpful Lilly also acted as our shopping guide for Burmese rubies. All this was long before the revolutionary government came to power and sealed off the country. Many foreigners from China, India and Pakistan were then living and conducting business in Burma. They lived amicably with the Burmese as well as amongst themselves.

U. Aung invited me to his home for a meal one day. On the way we found the street blocked by a huge platform under a decorated canvas awning. We had to leave the car and walk a quarter mile. It was quite usual to block off smaller streets if a young boy was becoming a novice monk. The neighbourhood joined in the celebrations, which was a family affair, the neighbourhood being included in "family." What impressed me most about the Burmese way of life was its innate simplicity and natural cheerfulness, so similar to life among the hillpeople back home. After an enriching series of experiences and an insight into the revision of the Tripitaka I returned to the Hill Tracts after about two weeks.

One evening in September, an Indian gentleman dropped in at the Rajbari. He brought an invitation from the 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations committee of India of which Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were office-bearers. This gentleman was an official of the deputy high commission of India at Dhaka. I thanked him for the invitation but asked why his attitude was so secretive and why he had not sent the invitation either by post or through the government. He smiled deprecatingly and said he had come personally to deliver it because otherwise I might not have received it. He told me that I was one of only two invitees from Pakistan. The other was a monk, Priyananda Bhikkshu from Chittagong district. He informed me that Buddhist luminaries from all over the world were coming to the Delhi celebrations – the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, U Nu and Madam Aung San, the King of Bhutan, the Chogyal Namgyal and Rani Chuni Dorje of Sikkim, and Christmas Humphreys, among them.

From the subcontinent of India and Pakistan our people in the Hill Tracts being the only original Buddhists, he emphasized, it would be a shame if I were to keep away. I told him I would be very happy and honoured to come. He anticipated the Pakistan Government's reluctance and even hinted that I might not be allowed to go. I did not see any reason why not. As it transpired, the Pakistan Government created no hurdles to my going nor to Bhikkhu Priyananda's. I had asked the government if I could convey any message for the occasion but received a reply that the government did not intend to send any messages.

I was, however, a little heavy at heart because Arati was expecting a baby in November. It was her third pregnancy. Our first child, a daughter, we had lost when she was only six months old. The second was a perfectly formed little baby but it was a "placenta praevia" case and he was premature and stillborn. Now, through the Tathagata's blessings we were hoping and praying for an uncomplicated delivery and a healthy, longlived baby. Dr. Bottoms, the missionary doctor at Chandraghona, was going to England on furlough and volunteered to let us have his bungalow on the hill above the Mission Hospital. Dr. Taylor, who would be in charge was a noted gynaecologist and would be near at hand. So we, our family and my mother-in-law, moved to Chandraghona in October, from where I left for New Delhi in November for the celebrations. Our eldest daughter, Chandra Kalindi Desiree was born in the early hours of 23 November, while I was in Delhi.

Among the eminent scholars that spoke at the symposium I had the pleasure of hearing the great philosopher Dr. Radhakrishnan, then India's Vice President. He delivered an erudite speech on the essential philosophy of the Buddha. At a reception Jawaharlal Nehru engaged me in conversation. At one point he asked about the progress of the hydroelectric project at Kaptai. When I was explaining its location he rather abruptly intervened with, "I know my geography." Immediately realizing that he might have sounded brusque he was genial again.

Outwardly, Sino-Indian relations were of the best and "Hindi Chini bhai bhai" (Indians and Chinese, brothers) was a common slogan. During the celebrations at a well- attended public meeting at the Ramlila grounds Nehru and Zhou En Lai both spoke. In the middle of the speeches a bomb exploded and I saw many people at the edges of the grounds running in all directions. However, no visible damage was obvious, except that one wondered whether "Hindi Chini bhai bhai" was deep-seated or a facet of temporary political brinkmanship.

At a luncheon given by Premier Nehru in which his daughter Indira Gandhi played hostess, just as I was going to my place at the second table, Nehru had a whispered conversation with one of the local functionaries. Then he sent his daughter over to ask me to sit at the Prime Minister's table. Mrs. Gandhi, I recall, wore a rich golden orange Benares silk sari and was quite affable. I do not know if the last minute change of place was because I represented the only area in the subcontinent that had original Buddhists or because being the representative of Pakistan, with whom relations were perpetually sensitive, it was deemed expedient. Of all the luminaries present at the functions I was most impressed with the 21-year old Dalai Lama who exuded a certain warmth and an illimitable grace that stirred me deeply.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

East-West Relations

In 1948, Jinnah declared Urdu the State language of Pakistan. The etymology and history of Urdu takes one back to the stables and the Mughal soldiery. It was a via media between Hindi and Persian. The former was the language of most of the governed, particularly of Delhi, the U.P. and neighbouring areas of Northern India. And Persian was the court language of the Mughals, and remained so until the British changed it to English in 1835. Arabic of course is the language of the Quran. However, one who knows the Quran, even by heart (a Hafiz-e-Quran), does not necessarily know the meaning of the words. Somebody who knows Arabic has to explain what it is all about. It is like Pali to the Theravada Buddhist who can recite a sutra without knowing the meaning of the words, or a Catholic at church where the service is in Latin, and a Hindu listening to a priest reciting Sanskrit slokas and mantras. King Alfred drove the invading Danes from Wessex to the north of England and made a peace treaty in 886 A.D. It is written that: "Alfred said that when he became king, there was not a priest in the kingdom who could understand the *meaning* of the Latin church service, though they could repeat the *words*." Most of the Prime Ministers of Pakistan, even those hailing from West Pakistan, as well as the founder and first Governor General Jinnah himself, were more at home in English than they were in Urdu.

The Bengalis, who formed the majority of the population of Pakistan, resented the declaration of Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan in 1948. (Thirty years after becoming a separate nation, Bangladesh achieved better population control and now has a smaller population than Pakistan.) They wanted Bangla to be declared a state language, on par with Urdu, but the Central Government did not agree. All educated Bengalis knew English, after Bangla, but hardly anyone, educated or otherwise, spoke Urdu, and still fewer could read or write the language. Two important exceptions were Khwaja Nazimuddin and Iskander Mirza. The former was the grandson of the Nawab of Dhaka and was educated at Cambridge University, and the latter belonged to the Nawab family of Murshidabad and was educated at Sandhurst. Like many upper class Muslim families in Bengal then, Urdu and English were spoken at home, but this number was minuscule.

The language dispute culminated in the killing of a number of students on 21 February 1952, when the police fired upon a demonstration by Dhaka University students. A few years later, a monument was erected on the site. It was called the Shaheed Minar, the Martyr's Monument. In Bangladesh, every 21 February is a public holiday, to commemorate the event. After the provincewide riots and the killings, the Central government conceded the Bengali demand and declared Bangla

also a state language. It was, in effect, like locking the stable door after the horse of national unity had bolted.

Bengalis, particularly after the language issue, began to resent what they considered West Pakistani, predominantly Punjabi, civil-military bureaucratic control and domination, injustice and exploitation. They felt the earnings from the sale of jute, which was grown exclusively in the eastern wing, and which was the greatest export earner of Pakistan that received a boost during the Korean War, were spent in West Pakistan. At partition, the per capita income of West Pakistan was Rs.330/- and East Pakistan's Rs.305/-. During 1950-54 manufacturing output grew at the rate of 34% in West Pakistan and 21% in East Pakistan. Between 1947 and 1961 development outlay in West Pakistan was Rs. 430/- crore and in East Pakistan Rs. 172/- crore.

A growing perception that became conviction, and with it resentment, in East Pakistan was that it was being sucked dry, that all the development, industrial, agricultural, and in every other sector, was being carried out in the western wing at the cost of the eastern. The services, the bureaucracy, the industrialists and big business, all belonged to West Pakistan. Poor East Pakistan was getting poorer and the vampires of the western wing were sucking its blood dry.

It has nevertheless to be remembered that at the time of partition, East Bengal, which became East Pakistan, was the hinterland of industrialized West Bengal, particularly Calcutta, which was not only the capital of combined Bengal but in the earlier days of the British Raj it was the capital of the Bengal Presidency and of the whole of India. A Bengali politician cum intellectual had rightly or wrongly coined the dictum, "What Bengal thinks today, the rest of India thinks tomorrow." East Bengal was the backwaters and as such had hardly any infrastructure. There were only a few miles of mettalled roads, few health and communications facilities because of which there were practically no industries. All the jute, its greatest export earner, went to factories in and around Calcutta. It had no factories of its own.

Begum Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, in her biography of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, writes: "By forming the first opposition party in Pakistan, Shaheed Bhai did the greatest service to the cause of democracy because without an opposition no democratic system can work. The first meeting of the Awami League was held in Lahore on 19 and 20 March 1950 at Mochi Gate. ..... The Party in East Pakistan was much stronger because the situation was more explosive. Maulana Abdul Hamid Bhashani, who had come over from Assam, became the President; Attaur Rehman, Vice President; Shamsul Haq and Mujibur Rehman, Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively. ..... But in East Pakistan it emerged as a strong and organized party, and with the coming elections it began to consider the possibility of coalescing with other parties. There were no less than half a dozen in the field. The Krishak Sramik Party of Fazlul Haq was the strongest. Then there was the Ganatantri Dal, and the Nizam-e-Islam Party. As much as all these parties wanted autonomy for East Pakistan, Bengali as the national language and objected to the Mutual Defence Pact

with the United States there was a wide range of differences in their perceptions. This was apparent before and during the elections, but despite this they succeeded beyond expectation. The United Front swept the polls and defeated the Muslim League candidates in every constituency. In a house of 309 it secured 223 seats. The Muslim League got only nine. There had been seething discontent in East Pakistan, both in political and economic matters. The feeling of being neglected and exploited for the benefit of West Pakistan was growing, the election results were an expression of this feeling. Fazlul Haq became the Chief Minister with a four-member Cabinet to begin with. This caused great resentment in other parties, and there were charges and counter-charges.

Fazlul Haq then proceeded to Karachi to negotiate the relationship between the Centre and the provinces. While in Karachi he gave an interview to a Karachi correspondent of the New York Times in which he stated that he was in favour of absolute autonomy for East Pakistan. Terrible riots broke out at the same time in the Adamjee Jute Mills in East Pakistan, causing the death of more than 400 persons. This was the second serious outbreak of rioting since the coming into office of the new Government, the first being in Chandragona.

The two representatives we had in the assembly from the Hill Tracts were predictably ineffective. Their pleas, when they got a chance to voice them, were ignored. There were many parties jostling for power and the venerable Kamini Mohan Dewan was once abducted from the Chittagong railway station so as to ensure that he did not vote in the Assembly at Dhaka the following evening. Many of the mushrooming, evanescent coalitions were in and out of power in quick succession amidst Machiavellian manouvrings.

Ghulam Mohammad plotted against the United Front governments and made sure it was unstable as a coalition. After giving it a bit of rope to hang itself, he dismissed it, declaring an emergency under Section 92A. Shaista Ikramullah writes: Thus the effort of East Pakistan to create a constitutional democratic government ended in a debacle. Ghulam Mohammad appointed Iskander Mirza as Governor on 30 May 1954 with special powers. Mirza ruled like a West Pakistani bureaucrat. At least that was the Bengali perception. After some time he went to London for medical treatment, from where he was recalled to the capital. He then got involved in Central politics, and did not return to East Pakistan in his role as Governor.

However, Mirza was not called Mr. God, a sobriquet that was reserved for a senior Punjabi civil servant, who had been posted to East Pakistan in the mid 1950s. This gentleman later also held political office. Apart from abrasive demonstrations of bureaucratic power and frequent manifestations of arrogance, his self-importance seeped through his pores. On the other hand, the majority of West Pakistani civil servants were unprejudiced and efficient administrators who were accepted and respected.

On 12 August 1955 Fazlul Haq joined the Central Cabinet and later was appointed Governor of East Pakistan on 9 March 1956.

In 1956, in East Pakistan the Awami League government was headed by Ataur Rahman Khan as Chief Minister. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whom Suhrawardy used to fondly refer to as "my illiterate graduate," and who was the principal accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case that followed, and still later who became the Supreme Leader of the Awami League and the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, even then was the Awami League's most eloquent public speaker, and was noted for his superb organizational abilities.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had become the General Secretary of the Awami League in 1953. In the 1954 elections he was returned to the Provincial Assembly and became a Minister. The United Front Party that included the Awami League and a number of other parties defeated the ruling Muslim League Party by a heavy margin. However, members changed allegiance at the drop of a coin and successive coalitions ruled for short snatches of time, including Abu Hossain Sarkar's government that was the shortest lived, lasting for less than a week. During one of the unruly debates on the floor of the Assembly on 23 September 1958 some of the members went berserk and in the fracas someone threw a paperweight at the Presiding Officer, who happened to be the Deputy Speaker. The gentleman succumbed to his injuries and died. President Iskander Mirza dissolved the Central and Provincial Assemblies and declared Martial Law on 7 October 1958.

H.S. Suhrawardy (born on 8 September 1892 and died on 5 December 1963), the Premier of undivided Bengal who had contributed a great deal toward the creation of Pakistan, had continued to live on in Calcutta until 1949. However, he was not the only leader who had come to Pakistan later rather than immediately after partition. On becoming Prime Minister in 1956, he was the first Prime Minister to establish close relations with China, and to follow it up with a personal visit to Beijing. In March 1957, in return the Chinese Premier Zhou En Lai came to Dhaka at the invitation of Prime Minister Suhrawardy. The Chiefs were asked to receive the Chinese Premier in their regalia. The crowd at Dhaka airport had grown restive because the plane had been delayed four hours. After we were presented to Zhou En Lai and before the airport ceremonies were over the multitude invaded the tarmac. There was a general stampede. I found the Bohmong on the ground with his legs pedalling frantically in the air and tripping up any who came in contact. I managed to raise him up, and the Mong Raja and I dragged him to the safety of our car. I lost a bit of my jewellery and so did the other two. The Bohmong was furious at the lack of discipline and told me he would never again come to any Government function outside the Hill Tracts. And he never did.

Suhrawardy was the founder president of the Awami League, which initially used to be called the Awami Muslim League. Shortly after he took office as Prime Minister the Suez crisis erupted. His sympathy, like that of the Pakistani nation's, was with Egypt but this aroused Western displeasure. Ambassador Sultan M Khan,

our Foreign Secretary and later Ambassador to the US, was a junior diplomat posted to Cairo in 1948. He has written in his autobiography that the highest authority there had once told him, with regard to what he had felt was Pakistan's excessive posturing on behalf of Islam, that one would have imagined that before Pakistan came into existence there was no Islam.

The courageous and sagacious Suhrawardy, one of the founders of Pakistan and who served as Prime Minister for only a year, was ever generous. He never coveted money for himself or his family and died a poor man in a Beirut hotel, leaving neither palaces nor hefty bank accounts. In East Pakistan he was idolized for his leadership and for services to the nation and was buried in Dhaka in high honour and glory. He and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were perhaps the two most brilliant of our leaders after Jinnah, (and may be Liaquat Ali Khan). Bhutto achieved much and he awakened in the people a sense of self-worth and dignity. He had his faults no doubt and some of his detractors feel that hubris was his undoing. But he did not steal from the state coffers or from society at large.

Bhutto was six when he went to Bombay with his parents and spent his early youth in that city. Sindh was a part of the Bombay Presidency until 1936. Bhutto was a great admirer of Napoleon and had some rare books on the French Emperor. Sherbaz Khan Mazari mentions in his book "A Journey to Disillusionment", that Bhutto was annoyed with him for refusing to part with a book that Bhutto coveted. There was a certain similarity in that when Napoleon died on 5 May 1821, he was 51 years of age. Bhutto was also of a similar age when he died. It is said that an astrologer in Bombay had told Bhutto that he had a brilliant career and would achieve the pinnacle of political heights, may be he would be Prime Minister or President. But when asked about longevity he was evasive. However, when pressed he is reported to have said, "I cannot see clearly beyond 50 years."

Suhrawardy was fond of "ballroom" dancing. I recall a small dinner-dance party in Customs Collector Commander Abdul Hamid and his wife Naseem's flat in Chittagong for Suhrawardy that I attended. Although he was quite a bit senior in age to most of us, the majority in their 30s and 40s, I was then 24 and he 64, Suhrawardy was quite at home and got along fine with the company. He was not tall but dapper and was a graceful dancer, and for a heavy set man light on his feet. Had he been able to govern for a little longer it is likely that he would have improved matters in Pakistan, particularly East-West relations. The antagonism between the two parts of Pakistan had been growing since almost the beginning and the collision seemed inevitable. The only route to reconciliation was through mutual respect, understanding, and inter-regional justice and fairplay based on sincerity and goodwill. Most of those that wielded authority proved themselves to be men of straw and like characters in a Greek tragedy each played his assigned role until the tragic end.

Suhrawardy's Bengali support too eroded when, due to political exigencies, he backed the West Pakistani landowners against land reforms that were enforced in

East Pakistan under the new Bengal Tenancy Act. Suhrawardy had allocated a $ 10 million aid package to East Pakistan in an effort to reduce the inter-wing imbalance. This annoyed the West Pakistani business class. As soon as he was removed, the Chundrigar government that lasted only six weeks cancelled the allocation. The main cause of the downfall of the Government of Chundrigar was said to be the difference of views on the joint electorate issue. The cancellation of the allocation, though a good part had been used, further angered the East Pakistani industrialists. Suhrawardy was one of the most able of Pakistan's leaders who lost out in the questionable manouvrings of power politics.

In the winter of 1957 President Iskander Mirza and his newly acquired Iranian wife Naheed camped at the Mainimukh Forest Rest House, about 50 odd jeepable miles north of Rangamati. He had invited me to lunch with him, so I set off early in the morning. On the way I bagged some wild fowl that I presented to the President. He, and especially Naheed were delighted. They had come to watch a "Kheda" operation. A herd of wild elephants is located, then after scouting around and observing the routes used and the particular propensities of the herd and especially of the leader, a camouflaged wooden stockade is built. At the appropriate time, with exploding crackers and the compulsive tattoo of drumbeats, beaters harass the herd and drive the elephants towards the stockade. When they have entered the funnel shaped enclosure the trap door is lowered. The animals then are captive and have no way of escape. However, success is not always assured. That year they trapped about a dozen elephants. After training, the elephants are sold to landlords and timber merchants. There used to be herds of them in the Reserved Forests. They would often venture farther afield, skirting neighbouring villages and help themselves to standing crops of rice paddy, or sugarcane, of which they were inordinately fond.

Iskander Mirza was the descendant of Mir Jafar, who had betrayed Nawab Siraj-ud-daula, as a consequence of which the English had won the Battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757 and with it Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Mirza, a bureaucrat, through a coup had become the Governor General of Pakistan in 1956 after throwing out Ghulam Mohammad, who himself had acquired the position of Head of State through intrigue. Mirza declared Martial Law on 7 October 1958. Ayub Khan, who had been appointed the commander-in-chief of the army on 6-9-1950, was appointed Chief Martial Law Administrator. On 27 October Ayub forced Iskander Mirza to relinquish office and hand over all powers to him. On 2 November Ayub unceremoniously exiled Mirza.

It is widely believed that Ayub sent his corps commanders Azam Khan (whom Mirza had called an idiot in 1953 for explicitly naming the mullahs) and two other senior generals late one evening to Mirza who met them in his dressing gown. He was given an hour and a bit to pack and to leave the country with his ambitious second wife Khanum Naheed. She was an Iranian lady, who, according to Mirza's son Humayun, in his look "Plassey to Pakistan", had relentlessly pursued his father. When she had hooked Iskander good and proper she divorced her husband, the Iranian Military Attache to Pakistan.

Mirza had been planning to oust Ayub and had sounded out one or two senior officers from the Navy and the Air Force. One of them was believed to have been Air Commodore Rub whom I subsequently met as our Ambassador in Bangkok in 1971, when I visited the city as Pakistan's Special Envoy. I was on a mission to South and Southeast Asia in an effort to avoid a war and arrive at a political settlement of the East Pakistan civil war. Mirza's overtures did not succeed. They would not play ball. Ayub got wind of it and struck before Mirza could.

Another version has it that notwithstanding Mirza's abortive attempt in collusion with the Interior Minister Nawab Gurmani to dismiss Ayub, the latter had all along used Mirza and bided his time to grab power for himself when the time was propitious. Iskander Mirza went into exile to London and joined an Indian restaurant called Veeraswami's, and lived in penury. Humayun Mirza writes, "Ex-President Mirza was sent out of Pakistan by the military with nothing but the clothes he was wearing; he did not even have money to tip the porter or pay for his hotel upon his arrival in London. If it had not been for the kindness of friends like the Ispahanis, he would have been totally destitute..... His only income was an annual pension of Pounds 3,000 (about US $ 4,500) as former general and president". Some years later, when he died, his body was taken to Iran for burial.

To understand the why and how of Bangladesh further, brief glimpses of Bengal's history might help. In 1905 the British divided Bengal into East and West. West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa became the province of Bengal. East Bengal including the Chittagong Hill Tracts was merged with Assam to become the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Before East Bengal had a chance to demonstrate its viability in the quiltwork of the then Indian subcontinent, due to the fulminations of vested interests and the behind the scene machinations of some wily West Bengal politicians, the partition of Bengal was undone. The Declaration of Annulment was made by George V, the King Emperor of India at the Delhi Durbar on 12 December 1911. Bengal was again partitioned at the division of the country into India and Pakistan in August 1947.

CHAPTER XXIX

The disastrous Kaptai dam

In 1782 Warren Hastings was appointed Governor of Bengal and the following year he became the first Governor General, under Lord North's Regulating Act, with a Council of four members. In 1784 he resigned. He went back to England, was impeached in Parliament and seven years later was acquitted. For a year McPherson held the fort. Lord Cornwallis took over in 1786 and ruled India until 1793.

For a number of years the Chakmas waged war against the English and bested them in a number of battles. But when his people suffered severe privations due to an economic blockade Jan Bux opted for a peaceful resolution. Since the Chakma King Jan Bux Khan had signed a peace treaty with Lord Cornwallis at Fort William, Calcutta, in 1787, the biggest single calamity for the Chakmas up to 1960, has been the dam – the hydroelectric project at Kaptai. Soon after the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the East Pakistan government revived the long-abandoned British scheme for a hydroelectric project at Barkal, 28 miles above Rangamati. There were natural rapids here below a deep gorge but the site was rejected ostensibly due to its proximity to the Indian border. If the dam had been built here some Indian territory, mainly barren hill slopes, would no doubt have been submerged. Navigation in the upper reaches of the Karnafuli river in India itself, and its tributaries, like the Harina and the Thega on the border, and tributaries upstream however, like Harani-Marani would have greatly improved, and possibly India would have agreed to the loss of a few square miles of infertile hill terrain. At best she would have demanded some compensation. However, Government opted not to negotiate with India.

Foreign engineers and experts then selected another site, a steep rockface at Chilardhak, 20 miles downstream from Barkal. Inexplicably, after some initial work, this site also was abandoned. Instead, the East Pakistan government selected a site downstream well below Rangamati. The hillmen felt the main reason for constructing the dam at Kaptai was politically motivated. It was a well deliberated decision to disperse the bulk of the Chakmas, particularly the well to do and the influential that inhabited the river valleys of the Karnafuli and its main tributaries, the Chengi, the Subalong and the Kassalong. The motive, they felt, was to disperse and weaken the most advanced, the Chakmas, politically and economically. It was called a multi-purpose dam, for it was supposed to provide not only electricity but flood control in the plains of Chittagong and irrigation facilities as well. As it turned out, since the dam was built there have been floods in the very region it was supposed to have saved, with almost unfailing regularity. As for irrigation, by its very coming into existence it submerged 54,000 acres of scarce plough lands. There was hardly anything left to irrigate except outcrops of rock or shale or stretches of wild bamboo and, here and there, steep sandy hillslopes, which needless to say required no

irrigation, and unwise disturbance of the topsoil by buffeting waves and the fluctuating lake level only accelerated erosion.

Factually, there were two benefits besides the generation of electricity that however, only provided a very small proportion of the province's requirement — improvement in navigation, though the rate of siltation has been more rapid in the upper reaches of the dam than expected, and fishery. Needless to say, despite oft-repeated and grandiose government plans and promises, not a single indigenous village has been electrified – though electricity found its way into towns, as well as villages in the plains districts. Nor has any part or percentage of the income from the sale of power been provided to the Hill Tracts. It is a repetition of the case of the Paper Mills at Chandraghona, where the hillpeople have neither been given employment nor is any portion of the income spent on the Hill Tracts, though all the raw material is supplied by the Hill Tracts. This is very different from the natural gas from Sui, in the Bugti Area of Balochistan, where there is an agreement with the tribe and substsantial sums by the gas extracting corporations and companies are paid every month to the tribes to be spent as they please.

Original estimates indicated about 50,000 persons would have to be shifted and about 200 square miles of cultivable as well as hill lands would be inundated. In the mid 1950's, the government set up a committee under my chairmanship, which included one or two government officers, to give our views. We submitted a comprehensive report. We estimated on the basis of data provided to us, that about 87,000 people would be displaced due to inundation, and about 30,000 others would also have to shift if the 87,000 shifted. If, for instance, 80% of a village had to leave, the remaining 20% could not exist in isolation, marooned in small isolated and dispersed islands, with the existing facilities all gone, including their only source of livelihood – the cultivable plough lands.

We made a number of recommendations with regard to alternative lands for rehabilitation, mode and phases of shifting, mechanics of assessment and payment of compensation, and the economic rehabilitation of the displaced. We also proposed measures to ensure that integrity of the indigenous people was maintained. Many committees at various levels were subsequently set up and I had serious differences of opinion, which I voiced at these committee meetings. The government, either by design or by default, dealt with the problems most cavalierly, siphoned off the funds (over $ 51 million received from abroad specifically for this purpose), allocating a paltry sum of $ 3 million for rehabilitation and compensation. They entrusted the operations to hidebound or corrupt officials. There were a few notable exceptions like Syed Afzal Agha, M.A. Kareem Iqbal, and O.M.Qarni – C.S.P. officers from West Pakistan. The man in overall charge was an old ICS (Indian Civil Service) officer called Hatch-Barnwell, Member Board of Revenue. The nature of the task, however, was too gigantic for one or two men, especially when hamstrung with an unsympathetic government.

Syed Afzal Agha was transferred out due to his sympathy for the hillpeople, and O.M. Qarni, the Rehabilitation Officer cum Additional Deputy Commissioner's views were likewise ignored. The brunt of the thankless task fell on Kareem Iqbal, who with great limitations of funds did his best. He was an extremely hardworking and efficient officer trying to build a pyramid with pebbles almost single-handed. The maximum compensation for land, for instance, was arbitrarily fixed at Rs. 900 per acre and the minimum at Rs. 300. This was an outrageous figure because it was hardly the price of one year's crop. A mango tree was assessed at Rs. 10 ($ 2 at that time) although one season's crop fetched at least ten times that amount, and even if the tree were to be sold as firewood it would have fetched more.

Shifting expense was fixed at so ridiculous a figure that I refused to accept any money for myself and my staff and dependants. I told the government that they paid more money to their *peons* and *chaprassis* (low-paid office orderlies) when they were transferred from one station to another. For lands, houses and trees I cited rules and practices of government but as this was an Excluded Area those rules did not apply. Yet when it suited them the "Excluded Area" status did not prevent them from introducing adult franchise in order to bring the Tracts within the ambit of the provincial legislature or in introducing the harsh and discriminatory Agricultural Income Tax Act. But what the provincial government did apply was grotesque and monstrously iniquitous.

Along with other leaders, we made innumerable representations and took delegations to government functionaries, including the governor of the province. We heard soothing words and many promises of redress but in substance very little was gained. If we had guns (and hillmen were given even shotgun licences with great reluctance), we would have fought even unto extermination. That was the feeling of the vast majority. We had no guns so we seethed in silence, in humiliation and anger.

To cap it all, even from the meagre pittance given by government for "rehabilitation and compensation", a good portion was misused (which was expected), misappropriated (naturally), and even in making payment to the displaced persons some of the disbursing officers retained a certain percentage. If anyone demurred, he was fobbed off and told to come on another day and so on and on, *ad infinitum*. One Chakma received some money – minus the illegal extortion and in front of the officer tore the currency notes into bits and threw it at the officer's face. The mealy-mounthed hypocrites said it was to ensure that the simple people didn't "squander their money on luxury items" that they had decided on instalment payment, overriding our protests. On the next instalment also the fixed percentage was retained from the man's due compensation. He complained against the official but there was no proof, because you sign first and receive after, inside a room where there is only officialdom.

Government admitted that more than 100,000 persons were displaced. The area inundated is estimated to vary from 400 to 600 square miles, in place of 297 square miles as had been officially given out. The level in the lake, in the course of a

year, fluctuates more than thirty feet and some lands are out of water for a part of the year. Government inefficiency reached its pinnacle in having to re-rehabilitate, that is to say, twice displacing several thousand persons who were flooded out of their new government allotted lands in the Sharbuatali and Khedarmara areas of southern Kassalong Rehabilitation Area. The proffered excuse – faulty contour marks on old survey maps.

From amongst those shamans who knew the ancient magical formulas, one or two are said to have used their art on the dam site at Kaptai and caused epidemics like cholera, twice. They also claimed they succeeded, through the intervention of malleable spirits, in cracking a portion of the coffer dam when it was halfway across the Karnafuli, thereby putting back the work schedule by another year. This did happen though the cause may have been different. The hapless can always find solace in imagination. Against cruelty and tyranny, whom else could the Chakmas count on but spirits?

The old Rajbari stands about thirty feet under water. The Karnafuli Dam at Kaptai inundated the catchment area partially in 1960 and fully by 1962. The dam affected directly and indirectly, almost entirely the Chakma territory that comprises half the Hill Tracts, and a small area near Mahalchari of the Mong Raja's Circle. Over 100,000 people, preponderantly Chakma, were displaced from their lands and their homes, and over 54,000 acres of scarce arable land (40% of total cultivable land in the Hill Tracts) was lost to the waters of the lake. The rehabilitation of some of the affected plough cultivators, and nominal compensation by government was, to put it mildly, hopelessly inadequate. It is a verified fact that bulk of the World Bank and other funds received from international sources for the purpose was diverted elsewhere by the government, as confirmed by Prof. Amena Mohsin in her writings and monographs, and others.

The Jummas in the catchment area that comprised hundreds of square miles, that is, people who lived by jumming, were totally excluded from the Rehabilitation Programme and received neither any monetary compensation nor alternate lands for jumming or fruit growing on the hill slopes. Alternative plough land was of course out of the question as there was not enough available even for a small fragment of those who had lost their cultivated plough lands. Homeless and without resources, feeling abandoned, deprived and driven out, over 40,000 displaced persons, almost all Chakma, left for India and took shelter in the remote wilds of Arunachal Pradesh bordering China, then called the NEFA (North Eastern Frontier Agency). Despite a judicial verdict in their favour, and after a lapse of forty odd years, they have yet to be recognized as Indian citizens. Pradhir Talukder has made a CD video cassette in 2002, with live interviews of some of the Chakmas and others in Arunachal. A retired senior government officer Utankamani Chakma, who was Secretary to the NEFA government at the time of the Chakma Exodus in 1964 has made a few cogent observations that:

1. Most of the areas where the Chakmas were settled are no man's land.

2. Hundreds by the day perished on the journey to NEFA (now Arunachal) because of malnutrition mainly.
3. He was asked by the Governor and Chief Minister to find places for settling the Chakmas. The areas selected were uninhabited, still the consent of the local tribes living in the vicinity were taken.

Other emerging facts:

4. Kunkugam Singpho also in his interview confirmed that he and his people were happy to welcome the Chakmas, who were also Buddhists like them, and who were in trouble.
5. On 10 February 2002 a whole line of Chakma women and girls were seen participating in the funeral rituals of a senior Buddhist monk and on the 19th many Chakma people were assembled at Diyun Bazar. The Chakma women were selling vegetables, quite some distance away and one middle-aged woman was ploughing the field with a pair of oxen.
6. We also learnt that there is only one doctor for 10,000 people in the three districts of Arunachal, which is about 30,000 sq. miles in area.
7. A Chakma teacher of a primary school mentions that the community pays him and the other teachers. The Government pays the salary of only one teacher.
8. Utankamani Chakma also says that one or two of the smaller non-Chakma ethnic groups are on the verge of extinction and that some had recently come from Burma. There were about a 100 groups of indigenous peoples in Arunachal.
9. At present there were said to be only about 26,000 Chakmas in three districts of Arunachal.

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It may be relevant here to include one of the perspicacious and empathetic Prof. Amena Mohsin's articles on the Hill Tracts situation, for a greater understanding of some of the severe problems of the people. She is Professor of International Relations at Dhaka University.

"Slash and Burn" published in New Internationalist 332 in March 2001, Pp. 27-28:

Aid/Bangladesh INDIGENOUS PEOPLES – Amena Mohsin

30 YEARS OF AID
AND DEVELOPMENT

AID THAT
MARGINALIZES
MINORITIES

Minorities, especially indigenous peoples, have almost been left out of aid and development plans formulated in the national capital. Big dam projects, for example, bring prestige and electricity to city dwellers but displace native people. Aid packages in general promote industrial or export-led models, which are bound to leave minorities at the margins – and often harm the environment to boot.

Slash and Burn

Whether ruled by Britain, Pakistan or Bangladesh, for the Hillpeople of Chittagong aid-driven development has been a bitter experience, as Amena Mohsin explains.

Why do you Bangalis call us *upajati* (sub-nation)? We have a language, culture, religion and land of our own. We may be few in numbers, we may be a small nation but we are not sub-anyone. We are an egalitarian people. Please don't impose your notions of hierarchy upon us; these are alien to us.

I faced these questions from activist Shubimol Dewan on one of my visits to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. I had no reply for him. But the implications and substance of what he said have haunted me ever since.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts are located in the southeastern part of Bangladesh and are home to 11 different national communities commonly referred to as 'the Hillpeople'. In the name of development the state has exploited local resources – and marginalized local people in the process. Despite almost two decades of armed resistance and the recent signing of a peace accord with the Government, the Hillpeople remain trapped within a state model of 'development', which continues to rob them of their resources while disregarding their interests. The erosion of he Hillpeople's rights began with the advent of British colonialism. The British attacked the Hillpeople's *Jhum* or 'slash and burn' mode of cultivation, which was considered 'primitive'. The fallow periods built into jhum were considered uneconomic and the plough was introduced instead.

With plough cultivation came the concept of private property, which began its erosion of the Hillpeople's communitarian and egalitarian way of life. It also opened up the Hills to Bangalis who were hired to do the ploughing on leased land for commercial purposes. Tea, coffee, orange and teak plantations were established by European entrepreneurs on high-quality land while the areas available for jhum were reduced to just a third of what they had been. The alienation of the Hillpeople from their land had begun.

When India was partitioned and became independent in 1947, the Chittagong Hill Tracts were rather unexpectedly allocated to East Pakistan. The Pakistan Government's first thought was how to maximize the exploitation of the natural resources of the Hill Tracts – and it called on foreign aid to make that possible. In 1953 it set up the Karnafuli Paper Mill at Chandraghona, paying for the construction

with $13 million in aid funds, including $4 million from the World Bank. The mill was given the right to extract the raw materials from the forests for 99 years. It created 10,000 jobs but only 200 of those went to Hillpeople – and those in the most menial positions. The ecology of the region has suffered cruelly in the years since, both through commercial logging and the monoculture plantation of teak, which has sounded a death knell for wildlife.

The greatest blow of all to Hillpeople's lives came with the decision of the Pakistan Government, again backed by foreign aid, to industrialize East Pakistan by harnessing the water resources of the Hills. To this end between 1957 and 1962 a hydro-electric dam was constructed on the Karnafuli river in Rangamati with US financial and technical assistance. The project created a 650-square-kilometre upstream reservoir, submerged 40 per cent of the district's prime agricultural land and displaced 100,000 Hillpeople.

Even the royal palace of the Chakma chief went under water – a huge psychological blow for the local population. About 40,000 of the displaced people crossed over to India where they still languish, stateless. The Pakistan Government had set aside over $ 51 million for rehabilitation but less than $ 3 million of this was actually distributed. It had also promised the Hillpeople free electricity – yet four decades later, three of those as part of Bangladesh, still only one per cent of the local population has access to electricity, and even that is not free.

Bangladesh's liberation brought no liberation for the Hillpeople – in fact it made things worse. In 1979 the Bangladesh Government did away with the restrictions on outside settlement in the Hills that were enshrined under the British. A deliberate policy of Bangali settlement was embarked upon and by 1984 around 400,000 Bangalis were settled in the region. The Government justified the move by citing the Hillpeople's aversion to development and the 'emptiness' of the Hills. It also insisted that Bangalis had only been settled on government-owned land.

'We have been betrayed – Sold out To the transnationals'

The Hillpeople, it is true, have a different notion of development – one that is in harmony with their lives and with their land, much of which is unsuitable for cultivation. What the State saw as government land, the Hillpeople regarded as community land. The naked truth is that the Government has done its utmost to turn the Hill Tracts into a Bangali-dominated region – with some success, since today Bangalis constitute 50 per cent of the total population of the Hills.

Fortified hills: a Bangladeshi military Base in Rangamati

The Hillpeople, who are neither Bangali nor Muslim, have been marginalized in cultural, religious and economic terms. Tridivesh a student of mine from the Hills, lamented: 'In our own land we have become aliens. Ultimately we might become like the native Americans.'

Government sensitivity to Hillpeople's concerns remains virtually non-existent. The Karnafuli Dam and Rangamati are major tourist sites and the state tourism magazine proudly proclaims that on a moonlit night the submerged royal palace can be seen.

No one should assume, however, that the Hillpeople have not mounted their own resistance. The Karnafuli Dam was the catalyst. The loss of land made people take to education and gave birth to an educated middle class, which was to lead a nationalist movement for autonomy. After the creation of Bangladesh a militant movement evolved in the Hills under the leadership of Manabendra Narayan Larma, in protest at the refusal of the State to grant any recognition to communities other than Bangalis.

The Hillpeople's response was to construct their own nationalist identity under the name of Jumma – the word derived from jhum, the traditional mode of cultivation which had been negated by outsiders, but which Hillpeople saw as the symbol of their pride and distinctiveness. Larma formed a political front operating from bases in India, and soon a military wing, Shanti Bahini, was added to it.

The reaction of the Bangladesh Government was brutal. In the name of national security the Hilltracts underwent full-scale militarization. During this period there were as many as 11 massacres, not to mention innumerable cases of rape, abduction and torture. Many Hillpeople were forced to leave their homes and live in 'cluster villages' where their lives were controlled by the military. Another 50,000 crossed over to India as refugees.

Militarization also ravaged the ecology of the region. In the name of counter-insurgency large tracts of forests were denuded. The Chittagong Hilltracts Development Board, a body largely funded by the Asian Development Bank, also came under the control of military. Hillpeople allege that its development plans have only benefited Bangali settlers. The allegation came as no surprise to me as I looked around while having my dinner in the Khagrachari main market, where all but two or three shops belonged to Bangalis. Meanwhile road development projects undertaken with Australian aid are alleged to have been built for military purposes, though the roads also allow Bangali settlers and planters easy access to the forest as they seek to exploit its resources.

After two decades of local resistance and military repression, a peace accord was signed on 2 December 1997. The accord has brought an end to the armed hostilities and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was given the UNESCO Peace Award in 1999 as a result. Yet peace remains elusive in the Hills and the accord has consolidated Bangali dominance. It recognizes the Hillpeople as 'tribals', thus upholding the supremacy of the Bangali 'nation'. Bangali settlers will remain in the Hill Tracts and, while the accord talks about determining the proper ownership of the land, most Hillpeople do not have land deeds that will back their claim for the current occupiers of the land to be removed.

In the meantime the plans of the Government continued apace: opening up the Hills for oil and gas exploration by foreign firms and involving the military in the infrastructural development of the Hilltracts. I am sure such 'development' endeavour only remind the Hillpeople of the Karnafuli Dam debacle, which they regard as their teardrop. I am reminded of Jiku, a student of mine from the Hills, who right after the signing of the accord said to me: 'We have been betrayed – sold out to the transnationals.'

According to Mahfuzul Haque's book "Ethnic Insurgency and National Integration": "These people, one sixth of the total tribal population, were promised both financial compensation and substitute land. The compensation package did not work well. As a result 40,000 families, mostly Chakmas migrated to India. The flooded dam uprooted 10,000 families engaged in sendentary cultivation and 8,000 Jhumiya families. In view of shortage of cultivable lands, the length of the cycle of shifting cultivation drastically decreased from 10 to 3-4 years. Moreover, five units of Kaptai Hydro-Electric Project produce on an average of 242 mega watts of electricity, which is only 11 per cent of the country's total production of 2200 megawatts. In another study, it is 12.5 per cent of the country's total production. Now question arises, was it economic for the country to incur colossal socio-economic damage at the cost of a negligible amount of electricity." Then he says, in a survey it was found that "94 per cent of the chakmas felt that the economic condition of tribal people had been better before the Kaptai dam was constructed." Sad and all too true.

It is widely reported that the vast sylvan wealth has been depleted, and even the Reserved Forests that occupy a quarter of the territory of the Hill Tracts, have been practically denuded of their commercial timber by unscrupulous businessmen in collusion with certain civil and military officials. The rich and varied fauna that inhabited the Tracts have suffered great depredations too. The rhinoceros, the local bison, certain bears and deer have become extinct, and tigers and panthers are scarce. A number of other species have disappeared and even the wild elephant is rare nowadays. There were so many wild herds that trapping wild elephants was an annual feature not only in the days of the British Raj but also in the Pakistan days. The wanton destruction of flora and fauna has to be stopped quickly and ecologically appropriate measures initiated with a sense of urgency. Also the indigenous people have no protection against outsider manipulative middlemen who control cartels and transportation agencies that force the fruit growers to sell at well below market

prices. Needless to say no factories for canning fruits or for preserving them have been set up or arrangements for marketing. Decorticating plants for processing cashewnuts also have not been set up. As a consequence especially perishable fruits like the pineapple have to be disposed of at buyers' prices.

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Inundation of the old Rajbari (Palace) at Rangamati ---
due to the Kaptai dam in 1961.

CHAPTER XXX

President Ayub

President Ayub ruled Pakistan for over ten years – the "decade of development". In so far as execution of development projects was concerned, his record was the best, and UN reports would quote Pakistan's performance as exemplary. Even in East Pakistan roads were built, new industries set up, and a certain amount of material progress in health, education and agriculture, as well as a great increase in capital outlay did take place. Since the inception of Pakistan no government has done as much for the development of the region as Ayub, before or since, up to the time of its breakup as East Pakistan in December 1971. However, this does not in any manner justify discrimination against East Pakistan in power sharing and in financial allocations.

Ayub appointed his able and trusted deputy, Lt. General Azam Khan who had quelled the Anti Ahmadiya riots so effectively in 1953, as the Governor of East Pakistan. Azam was the most popular of all the Governors of East Pakistan because of his effectiveness, energy and empathy, particularly with *chashis* (tillers) *mazdoors* (labourers), *jele* (fishermen) and *karigar* (workmen). However, the usual envy and pettiness prevailed and Ayub was told that Azam was becoming too popular and hence a threat to him. Ayub made the mistake of believing the canard and recalled Azam Khan. With his departure, the slowly fading animus against West Pakistan was rudely jolted, giving place to rampant and accelerating antipathy.

At the end of his career, the great Sher-e-Bangla A.K.M.Fazlul Huq too had become a Governor, after he had been removed as the elected Chief Minister in 1954 by Ghulam Mohammad, but by then he had become old and frail. I remember at a National Day Parade in Dhaka he had to be held by the elbows and lifted from his chair to take the salute and then helped back on to it every time a unit marched past the rostrum. Yet, it has to be remembered that for his services to Bengal he is second to none. He had suggested the elevation of the divisions to 4 provinces in East Pakistan to match West Pakistan, in an effort to get greater autonomy for East Pakistan. Had his view been respected perhaps the dismemberment of Pakistan could have been averted. Let us not forget that it was he who had moved the Pakistan resolution in Lahore in 1940, envisaging two Muslim states in the northeast and northwest of then India.

In the closing pages of East Pakistan's history another Governor tried to salvage the sinking ship, and on his advice being summarily rejected he promptly resigned. Had he been there earlier or had he been listened to by the junta in Rawalpindi, perhaps the end would have been different. He was the wise and farseeing Admiral Ahsan, at one time ADC to the first Governor General and founding father of the nation, the Quaid-i-Azam. The Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten

was said to have told Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah that he was fortunate in getting a new nation and even more so in inheriting Ahsan. Another noble and fair minded soldier and linguist, whose advice against imposing a brutal military rule was ignored, was the head of the military in East Pakistan, Sahabzada Yakub Khan, in March 1971. He immediately resigned. Years later he would become Pakistan's Ambassador to Washington D.C. and later still, Foreign Minister.

In October 1955, they bunched all the provinces of West Pakistan together and welded them into One Unit in anticipation of the decided upon parity formula. In the Constitution of 23 March 1956, Pakistan's first in nine years of chaotic political upheavals and verbose outpourings in the hallowed halls of the Constituent Assembly, the important politicians and bureaucrats hit upon the doctrine of parity between the two wings called West Pakistan, professedly as an equal partner of East Pakistan. However, the inequalities in almost every field were so vast that a few patchwork, cosmetic changes could not heal the gaping wound or bridge the growing chasm between the Central Government and the civil and military Establishment on the one side, and East Pakistani politicians and the Bengali population on the other. The Bengalis felt that though for the sake of unity they had sacrificed their majority status they were still not getting their due from the Central Government. Their discontent kept mounting.

On 2 January 1960 Ayub's experiment, the Basic Democracy system was introduced. It was not an unmitigated success, but it did provide people at the village level some participation in local development and was an improvement upon the District Board of the British system. But as a beacon of the Wilsonian concept of people's participation in the government of the country, and as a manifestation of the will of the governed, it was but a shadowy symbol because it could be, and was, wantonly manipulated. Roughly 1000 voters elected one basic democrat per ward. Five or six wards formed one union council. The Basic Democrats, 40,000 in each wing, formed the Electoral College that voted to power the members and the Chairman of the Union Council, Thana Council, District Council, the members of the Provincial and National Assembly, and finally the President of the Nation. In this unequal match the Combined Opposition Party (COP) prevailed upon Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, to contest. Her opponent was the incumbent President and founder of the Basic Democracy system himself, the General and later Field Marshal, Ayub Khan. As was to be expected, Ayub won.

Having got himself elected on a party-less basis, by defeating the Quaid's sister Fatimah Jinnah, some aver with plenty of irregularities and vote buying, Ayub now discovered that if he wanted to dabble in politics he needed political followers. In September 1962, pro-government members of the new legislatures banded together and formed the Convention Muslim League. Ayub Khan formally entered party politics but did not become the President of the Convention Muslim League until a year later.

The veteran Leaguers were peeved at an upstart's appropriating their party name. Khwaja Nazimuddin came out of retirement and in January 1963 he was welcomed in West Pakistan with great public support. He became the President of the Council Muslim League. On his death the following year, Nurul Amin, the former Muslim League Chief Minister of East Pakistan, succeeded him as the President of the Council Muslim League. The Muslim League (Qasem), a third splinter group, also came into existence.

In 1967, Sheikh Mujib was arrested as the principal accused in the Agartala conspiracy case but while his trial was being conducted in Dhaka people started coming on to the streets calling it a bogus, trumped up allegation, and agitating for his release. In both East and West Pakistan people started a movement against the government. Ayub called a conference of politicians from different parties and provinces but Bengali public opinion would have none else but Mujib to represent them. Their strong-arm tactics paid off and Ayub released Mujib and invited him to the conference. However, nothing came of the projected patch up with the country's politicians and the agitation against Ayub, who had fallen ill, reached a crescendo in early 1969.

On 25 March 1969, the Army Chief Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan made Ayub resign and hand over power to him. He declared martial law, and subsequently became the President. This was of course in contravention of even the 1962 constitutional provision regarding Presidential succession. Yet it was not without precedent, as Ayub himself knew only too well. Yahya Khan promulgated the Legal Framework Order under which elections were to take place in the whole of Pakistan — the first in the country's chaotic history, on the basis of adult suffrage. With the scrapping of the parity formula between East and West Pakistan, it meant that East Pakistan, on the basis of its 56% of the country's population, would have an in-built majority. East Pakistan would have 162 seats and West Pakistan 138 seats in the National Assembly which would also double as a Constituent Assembly and prepare a new constitution within 120 days, failing which it would stand dissolved. Yahya Khan also did away with the One Unit that West Pakistan had been forged into by President Ayub. The old provinces were back in existence.

The joint electorate system prevailed, which is to say that the religious minorities were not segregated, and voted for candidates of their choice like everybody else, and could stand in any constituency and aspire to seats in the legislature, in conformity with Jinnah's vision of a progressive and democratic Pakistan without any religious discrimination. Despite there 15% population strength in the whole of Pakistan only one minority candidate was successful, from the only National Assembly constituency with a non-Muslim majority of population, the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the 1973 Constitution too, the joint electorate system prevailed but no reservations of seats were provided for the minorities, or for women. On 24 September 1978 President Zia introduced an amendment providing for separate electorate, six reserved seats for non-Muslims in the National Assembly and nine in the Provincial Assemblies. In 1985 General Zia continued with the separate

electorate system, raised the number of reserved seats for minorities to 10 in the National Assembly and 23 in the Provincial Assemblies. Until then, only once, and only in East Pakistan Provincial Assembly elections in 1954, the separate electorate system had been adopted. Because of unstable governments, and Central Government interventions, Bengalis could not exercise provincial autonomy, even the limited version.

Two terms (10 years) of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and two terms of Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister that followed Zia's eleven years were based on separate electorate (and with reserved seats for minorities and women as provided for in Zia-ul-Haq's Constitution). President General Pervez Musharraf reinstated the joint electorate system (which the minorities wanted) for the elections to be held on 10 October 2002 but initially he had not provided any reservation for minorities although he had for women (30%). In August 2002, however, an amendment provided for ten reserved seats for minorities on the basis of proportional representation, but with no scope for direct election, and some seats in the Provincial Assemblies as well, on the same basis.

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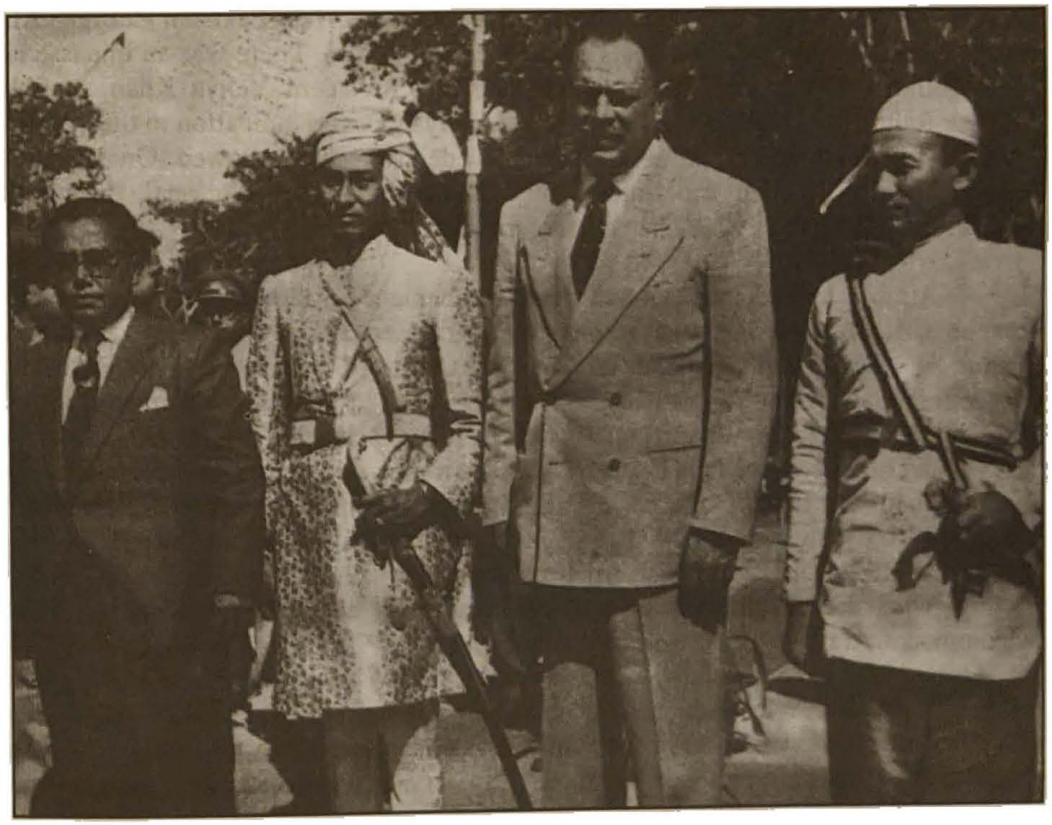

Raja Tridiv Roy: With F.M. Ayub Khan (President) and the other two Chiefs, Mong, (left) and Bohmong (right) at Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of New Rangamati Town (Capital of Chittagong Hill Tracts) in 1961

CHAPTER XXXI

Ominous 1 March

The Yahya government's assessment and evaluation of the projected scenario was that there would be various political parties with conflicting manifestos. And after the elections there would be a hotchpotch of parliamentarians from various parties and groups, at loggerheads with one another and therefore manageable and amenable to blandishments of one kind or another. In any case it would be well nigh impossible for this motley crowd to produce anything but weak coalitions through inane bargaining and the occasional horse-trading. In any event the first constitution had been about nine years in the making. Therefore it would be a miracle if the elected representatives produced a constitution within the stipulated time of 120 days as provided in the Legal Framework Order. But elections and politics have their own dynamics, and often do not conform to the plans of mice and men. And so it proved.

When the December 1970 election results came in, a totally unexpected picture emerged. In the whole of East Pakistan Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League won 160 of the 162 seats, that is all but two. In West Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Peoples Party won 81 seats out of the total of 138. There was an impasse in the negotiations to a political settlement between President Yahya Khan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto but Yahya gave no indication to the Awami League of his impending and abrupt unilateral decision that followed. On 1 March Yahya Khan postponed indefinitely the convening of the National Assembly scheduled for 3 March 1971. The volcano erupted.

Almost immediately violent civil disobedience followed and the Awami League virtually took over the administration of East Pakistan. There was chaos, confusion, murder and mayhem. The General Officer Commanding East Pakistan, Lt. General Sahabzada Yaqub Khan asked to be relieved when his recommendations against the use of force was rejected by GHQ. He was asked to hold on until 7 March 1971 when his successor Lt. General Tikka Khan took over. (Lt. General Sahabzada Yaqub Khan was twice Governor of East Pakistan, from 2 August to 1 September 1969 and from 1 to 7 March 1971). President Yahya held a number of meetings with Sheikh Mujib in Dhaka and also tripartite meetings with Mujib and Bhutto. After failing what he considered a last ditch attempt at evolving some sort of accommodation between the Awami League and the PPP, Yahya Khan left Dhaka on 25 March 1971. He left orders that the planned military crackdown should take place after he had landed in Karachi. According to Ahmad Salim's book, "The drama unfolds," when he was leaving for West Pakistan, Yahya Khan told General Tikka Khan at the Dhaka airport, "sort them out". "In the ensuing weeks this phrase was on the lips of many Army Officers."

"Why did you initiate the genocide in Dhaka?" a journalist asked Tikka Khan following the debacle. His reply was, "They were making preparations at the

Jagannath Hall to attack the patrol force with firearms. After that, I sent some forces to Jagannath Hall. It is true that some Hindus died on the occasion. When two groups fight or are in a combat, it can't be called genocide." In the book "The drama unfolds", Tajuddin Ahmad's side of the story is also given. He says amongst other things, "Evidence that agreement in principle between the contending parties had been reached is provided by Bhutto's own press conference on March 25. It is not certain what passed in the separate session between General Yahya and Bhutto but there is evidence that deliberate falsehoods about the course of the talks with the Awami League were fed to the PPP, who were told that Sheikh Mujib was determined to have a show-down and was daily escalating his demands. Needless to say not the slightest indication of these misgivings had been raised in the meetings between the Awami League team and General Yahya's advisers, where amicability and optimism prevailed to the end."

CHAPTER XXXII

Radcliffe Award and After

The Chittagong Hill Tracts, with 98% non-Muslim population, was included in East Pakistan by the Chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission. Many people believe that this anomalous decision was prompted on the "advice of the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten", who used this as a sop or counterpoise to the awarding of a Muslim majority area, Gurdaspur, to East Punjab, India, so as to provide India with a land connection with the native State of Jammu and Kashmir. East Bengal that some time after partition took on the name East Pakistan, with a little over 55,000 square miles of territory was slightly smaller than Nepal. Its population, however, was greater than that of the whole of West Pakistan, with a territory of over 305,000 square miles, comprising the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province, Balochistan and the Tribal Areas.

A sense of impotent anger had been simmering ever since the partition of India in 1947 when the Hill Tracts was placed in Pakistan, though the population of non-Muslims was about 98 percent. Not that they wanted to join India, though some politicians had felt that would have been more desirable. In point of fact they wanted to be on their own, as they had been before the British annexed their territory and deprived them of their independence in 1860.

As time passed those who had preferred India were disillusioned when they looked at bordering Tripura, a quasi-independent Indian native state that had opted for India. The state was converted to a chief commissioner's province. The indigenous people were shouldered out of or their doors blocked to trade, commerce, business, government service and even non-governmental jobs. The Tripura people found that even their lands by one means or another gradually passed into the hands of the more advanced Bengalis of West Bengal. And this state of affairs was brought about despite constitutional and administrative safeguards provided by the Government of India, and despite the fact that it was a centrally administered area.

The condition of the Nagas and Mizos was worse, despite constitutional safeguards under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution, so much so that they had taken up arms against India in favour of sovereign Nagaland, and Mizoram. There had been a state of war in their regions between the freedom fighters and the Indian Government for years. In 1963 they were given greater autonomy and special privileges by the Indian government, and peace was restored. In the "seven sisters" of northeastern India, especially in Tripura, Manipur and Assam there is much political unrest, violence and guerrilla warfare, even today. As mentioned earlier, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills District were unified to form a State. In 1972 Mizoram, which was a union territory of 8134 sq miles and with a population of 322,000 (less than the Hill Tracts) achieved full statehood. In the same year, 1972

Tripura (a former native state), another union territory of 4035 sq miles (smaller than the Hill Tracts) acquired the full status of a state in India. Its population in 1971 was 1,557,000.

The chiefs and public leaders of the Tracts knew their only hope lay in an autonomous Hill Tracts. On the imminent independence of India, Kamini Mohan Dewan, the President of the Hillpeople's Organization, wanted for the Hill Tracts safeguards and autonomy similar to but stronger than that enjoyed by the Lushai Hills (later Mizoram) in Assam under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution, with the chiefs as constitutional heads. Raja Nalinaksha and the other two Rajas and the Hillmen's Association wanted independence as three self-governing States and a loose association with the neighbouring native State of Tripura.

As long as the area remained under the protection of the central government of Pakistan, as the Governor General's responsibility, they had hoped to be able to preserve their cultural identity and ethnic entity and homogeneity. According to the India Act of 1935 the Chittagong Hill Tracts was a Wholly Excluded Area, as distinct from a Partially Excluded Area, to be administered by the Governor of Bengal, as the Governor-General's Agent. The Laws enacted by the central and provincial governments did not apply to the Tracts and administration was carried out in accordance with customary laws, traditions and usages. The "Hill Tracts Manual" embodied a set of rules, loosely defining the powers and responsibilities of the chiefs and government, and these formed the guidelines of administration. Since the annexation of the Hill Tracts by the British in 1860, the Rajas as well as the people lost their independence and autonomy in succeeding stages but at least some important safeguards for the well being of the indigenous people against the exploitation and influx of plainsmen and greedy money lenders were maintained.

In the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan the Tracts was again declared an Excluded Area and its administration continued under the special "Chittagong Hill Tracts Rules of Administration 1900" (The Hill Tracts Manual). As long as the governor was a non-Bengali, the hillmen received a measure of protection against Bengali exploitation, aided by the fact that the deputy commissioner, who was the governonment's representative in the Tracts, was traditionally a British Army Officer with no bias in favour of Bengalis and usually with a pronounced sense of justice and fair play. In the 1962 Constitution, President Ayub Khan made it a Tribal Area, same as the provincially Administered Tribal Areas of the North West Frontier Province. Though he did not place the Tracts under direct central administration, a demand continuously being made from my grandfather's time to mine, at least the status quo in the form of safeguards and the Hill Tracts Manual remained, though some of the provisions were breached in actual practice. Their erosion, through official collusion, was geared toward greater Bengalisation, especially in increasing their numbers.

The indigenous hillmen of the Tracts had watched, with growing concern, the increasing Bengali chauvinism, intolerance and militancy. In the Hill Tracts this

racist attitude was compounded with religious intolerance toward hillpeople, who feeling increasingly alienated and victimized demanded regional autonomy and safeguards. They were in favour of direct central administration as a Tribal Area. Rule by delegated authority through the provincial government, which meant Bengali rule, was becoming increasingly odious. The only saving grace was that up to 1960 the Deputy Commissioners were non-Bengali. The Governor, who was the Agent of the Governor General, had been usually a Bengali since the mid-1950s and the East Pakistan Government being manned and run by Bengalis, the Hill Tracts was getting the thin end of the wedge. What was more disheartening was that over 90% of government functionaries posted to the Tracts were Bengalis who, barring notable exceptions, apart from lining their own pockets set about accelerating the Bengalisation of the Tracts.

In the recruitment to Class-I and II services not even 5% was taken from amongst the hillpeople even though there were qualified candidates. Even from the British period the literacy rate has been higher in the Tracts than that of the rest of Bengal. Yet, even in the lower ranking Class III and IV jobs plainsmen were given preference. On one or another pretext, including adverse secret intelligence reports of the police, hillmen were denied employment. Business and trade concessions and permits went to Bengalis, not to speak of government patronage, although many were temporary residents, and overall the Bengalis constituted a small percentage of the population. Officialdom's circumventing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual and illegally allowing more and more Bengalis to settle in the Tracts accelerated Bengalisation.

Except for widows and the disabled, one could not sub-let one's lands, and sale was only allowed amongst indigenous hillmen. The exploitation of Bengali moneylenders, both Hindu and Muslim, was ruthless. They charged fantastic rates of interest and once in their debt a family remained in debt in perpetuity. No legal action could be taken because at the time of contracting the debt the hillman had to sign a paper that inflated the principal manifold.

To the hillman the plainsman is not merely an alien but one who has exploited him and his homeland, who has cheated him, harassed him, snatched at his women, ridiculed him. Man for man the hillman is physically superior and rarely would a Bengali dare strike a hillman. The latter is a cheerful, happy-go-lucky type, to whom the idea of bullying anyone, even a plainsman, is repugnant. But if provoked beyond endurance he would thrash a Bengali; it stopped short with a good hiding.

Indiscriminate settling of land to outsiders by Bengali Deputy Commissioners, on the plea of "development," despite the increasing need of jumming land for the indigenous population, impoverished the hillpeople further. The resultant change in the demographic complexion is noteworthy. The census of 1961 showed the plainsmen to be about 20%. Though the bulk of Bengalis was concentrated in two pockets – the Karnafuli Paper Mills, the largest paper mill in

Asia, and the Kaptai Dam site – they had heavy concentrations in market places and in the Feni Valley from where the hillmen were pushed out of their ancestral lands.

All lands rightfully belong to the indigenous people of the Tracts. Whatever be government's convenient, motivated and self-serving interpretation of the legal rights of the chiefs on their territories, the hillmen had been exercising unhindered rights over the land in perpetuity. The British Government had sought to appropriate all lands by a legal fraud stating that the chiefs, and by implication the people, had no right on the soil but only customary usage by government's implied consent. The reason for arrogating to themselves "rights on the land" was so they could extract maximum revenue and exploit the mineral and forest resources at will.

It is not a juridical or international view, nor of course is this the opinion of the chiefs or the hillpeople. Modern international juridical view tends to uphold the rights of the indigenous peoples on their lands and environment, and not that of the all-powerful governments', and this has been endorsed by the relevant ILO conventions. Judges and even governments especially in Australia, Canada, and even Japan, and in some instances in the US, have come round to this view. The Inuits in Nunavit is a case in point. In 1991, through negotiations between the Inuit leaders and the Federal Government of Canada, the indigenous people, the Inuits achieved autonomy and land rights over their vast territories in North West Territories from Manitoba to the North Pole.

The hillmen had the inalienable right to carry out jumming as did their forefathers, on customary payment of a nominal annual capitation tax to their hereditary chief. It was their right from time immemorial and not a privilege granted to them by anyone. In all fairness, however, it must be stated that over the years the grant of settlement of lands to non-hillmen by the British was to a few, to encourage plough cultivation and some for rubber and tea at the earlier days of their Raj, and that too was minimal.

The scale of injustice and discrimination indulged in by some of the Bengali officers and especially the police against the very people they had come to serve, was immeasurably revolting to any man or woman of conscience. If a hillman sought remedy in a local magistrate's court he invariably came off second best if his opponent was a Bengali, so he gave up going to government courts except when forced to do so to defend himself.

The incidence of crime is lowest in the Hill Tracts. A comparative analysis based on density of population shows it is far less here than in the rest of Bangladesh. In the early Pakistan period an English deputy commissioner, Lancelot H. Niblett, who had two tenures as Deputy Commissioner of the Hill Tracts, in a judgment mentioned that much of the so-called crimes were "crimes manufactured in evidence by the police." A hillman was often falsely incriminated in criminal cases by the police. These myrmidons of the law required fat bribes in order to abstain from

arresting a hillman on some trumped-up charge, filed in collusion with a non-resident Bengali.

Murder was rare in the Hill Tracts, and so was theft. People left their harvested crops in their fields. There were crimes of passion, over the years a few murders on account of it, but usually they were not premeditated. During the British period the number of Bengalis was small, usually a floating seasonal labour population, and there was harmony between the hillmen and the plainsmen – the latter constituting 2% at the time of partition in 1947. The chiefs' and headmen's courts decided "tribal" cases which were generally of a civil nature and often of love, displaced or misplaced, for they are an extremely romantic people. The headman had powers of imposing fine, restitution and detention. The Chiefs had powers of unlimited fine, imprisonment, restitution, detention and so forth. However, progressively the British government whittled away their powers so as to increase their own authority.

Lawyers were not permitted to practise in the Tracts and the magistrates were supposed to act as defence lawyers too and ensure against miscarriage of justice. It worked well during the British period when the integrity of the magistrates was unquestionable and the police was the Hill Tracts Police, comprising indigenous hillmen, rather than the provincial police. However, in the decade of the 1960s, from whence began the posting of Bengali Deputy Commissioners, two were perceived as honest and just – Sultanuzzaman Khan and Lutfur Rahman Khan.

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CHAPTER XXXIII

Violation of the Constitution

From the partition of India in August 1947, the administration in the Excluded Area continued as before under the special Rules under Regulation 1 of 1900. In the 1956 constitution of Pakistan, the Chittagong Hill Tracts remained an Excluded Area as before and outwardly its administration was carried out in the traditional manner as existing from pre-partition days. However, there was cumulative erosion of safeguards of the indigenous people in tandem with a diminution of the power, authority and autonomy of the Chiefs and Headmen. In the 1962 constitution of President Ayub Khan there was no provision for the Excluded Area, but the special status was recognized and the Hill Tracts was included in the category of "Tribal Area" and kept out of the purview of the legislatures. As such the main safeguard was that the laws of the Provincial as well as the Central Government did not apply to the Hill Tracts. Only for special reasons and with relevant modifications and limitations, and to the extent that it may be deemed necessary, exceptions could be made, and only with the express approval of the President. Of course in each case the practice was that the wishes of the people were ascertained. In West Pakistan this was done through the "jirgas" of the Chiefs and Maliks of the Tribal Areas. Also, of course the special form of administration, under the Hill Tracts constitution called the Hill Tracts Manual (under Regulation 1 of 1900) continued as before.

In the Hill Tracts the three hereditary Chiefs formed the Advisory Council of Government and rendered advice "on all important matters." It was incumbent on the Deputy Commissioner as the representative of Government to consult them on important matters of administration, and the rules provided for the holding of at least two Chiefs' Conferences every year. The custom was to invite the Divisional Commissioner to preside over these conferences.

The Pakistan constitution of 1962 specifically provided that no Tribal Area could cease to be such unless, among other conditions precedent, the President consulted and received the approval of the people themselves. Without consulting the people of the CHT or the Chiefs, an amendment was surreptitiously introduced and passed in the National Assembly by the then ruling political party. This was brought about on the urgings of a party stalwart and incumbent Speaker of the National Assembly, Fazlul Quader Chowdhury of Chittagong, who at the time was also wearing the hat of head of state, President Ayub being on tour abroad. This was a clear violation of the constitution wherein it is provided that it is mandatory for the President to ascertain the wishes of the people of a Tribal Area before any change can be made to its status.

After the fraudulent piece of enactment in the National Assembly by which the Hill Tracts was taken out of the Tribal Area status and thus shorn of vital constitutional safeguards, despite our protests more and more of our special laws were removed or disregarded by the Hill Tracts administration, with the East Pakistan Provincial Government's active connivance or tacit consent. In violation of Rules as provided for in the Regulation 1 of 1900, popularly known as the CHT Manual (embodying constitutional and administrative autonomy and safeguards), Deputy Commissioners started granting land settlement to outsiders, with the express purpose of bringing in plainsmen into the Hilltracts.

The only hope for the hillpeople of achieving autonomy for the Hill Tracts and in preserving their ethnic and cultural identity lay in the Central Government. Whatever measure of protection the hillpeople enjoyed was because of the Centre. Sheikh Mujib had refused to agree to provide special constitutional safeguards or guarantees for the Hill Tracts. We knew that promises of deveopment were merely a euphemism for further exploitation of the indigenous peoples and appropriation of their resources. We were aware that the Awami League wanted to make the Hill Tracts an ordinary district, of course in the name of Democracy and Freedom. In other words, the hillmen would become like tea garden labourers – the lands would belong to the wealthy Bengalis too as business, trade, commerce and government posts already did.

It was the familiar story of jobbery, nepotism and corruption – but above all else racial hatred of anyone who was not a Bengali. And as the hillpeople were ethnically as well as culturally and religiously different, they were regarded with positive hatred and contempt. As far as the hillmen were concerned, even the poorest and humblest of them looked upon the plainsman with tolerant condescension. There was a deep and abiding rift, and a mutual antipathy. A hillman's dream was his country freed from the Bengalis whom they used to order around in the British days and employ as domestic servants and seasonal labourers in rice paddy fields. Former servants turned masters since partition was difficult to stomach.

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CHAPTER XXXIV

First all Pakistan adult franchise elections

In December 1970, in the first ever general elections to be held on the basis of adult franchise on an all Pakistan basis, the Chittagong Hill Tracts for the first time was granted one full seat in the National Assembly. Hitherto the Tracts had comprised half a National Assembly constituency, being joined with the southern parts of Chittagong district once and the northern the next in both the previous elections – the 1954 elections being only for the East Pakistan provincial assembly. The hillmen candidates had stood no chance for a National Assembly seat against the wealthier and wilier Bengali candidates.

Many headmen and leaders from various indigenous peoples and communities called on me, and some through letters asked me to stand for the national assembly seat. The only person who demurred was my wife, Arati, who preferred me as a paterfamilias confining my activities to the Hill Tracts. She had not relished my role as a legislator, which necessitated long absences from home and family in attending provincial assembly sessions in Dhaka since 1962 when I was elected to the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly. I was elected unopposed for a second term in 1965. Amongst my efforts for the Hill Tracts people and for the people in general all over the country, I remember one suggestion I had made on the floor of the House that was not acted upon, until many years later, in the new Pakistan, and also Bangeladesh. I had recommended the introduction of the institution of ombudsman to protect citizens' rights from government functionaries. In Pakistan they have had a salntary effect and we should have them at the district level as well, for their beneficial impact to be more pervasive.

And now Arati told me she had a premonition and did not want me to seek election again. I promised to take her to West Pakistan, when a session was held there, should I win the elections. This did not satisfy her but nevertheless she accepted my decision to contest in good grace. I wrote to the other two chiefs of my intention and requested their support. The Mong Raja Momphru Sain welcomed the idea and pledged his full support. And so did the Bohmong Chief Maung Shwe Prue, who unequivocally declared that he himself was not interested in being a candidate for the seat.

One day in 1969 when the Bohmong had been a provincial minister, a mob had attacked and ransacked a number of ministerial houses in Dhaka at the prompting of the leftist firebrand leader, Maulana Bhashani. After partition he had come from Assam and the Awami League founder President, the astute and far seeing Suhrawardy had made Bhashani the President of the East Pakistan Awami League. Later he had broken away and was now the head of the National Awami Party. The Bohmong and his family had run away from their ministerial residence and from the rampaging mob and had taken shelter in Angus Hume's house in Dhanmandi. Having

resigned from government service in 1953 Hume had joined a Bengali business magnate Rai Bahadur Ranabir Prasad (R.P.) Shah for a while. He was a noted pre-partition Hindu businessman and philathropist who ran a hospital also in Mirzapur, some distance from Dhaka. By the 1960s Hume had joined another business firm called Pakbay in Dhaka. In the late 1960s when Maulana Bhashani was indulging in agitational politics in Dhaka and using his tactics of 'gherao' and 'jalao' (surround and burn) I was staying with Hume, having come for a provincial assembly session. Maung Shwe Prue and his family spent a week or so with the Hume family at Dhanmandi before the army restored law and order, and they could return to their residence in safety. Maung Shwe Prue's senior Rani Anuttara (Tukkabi) was a Chakma and the daughter of a wellknown political leader Abani Ranjan Dewan. She was then at Banderban, the Bohmong's capital. His second Rani, a Marma Lady, was with him in Dhaka.

Maung Shwe Prue had a rival in his nephew, Aung Shwe Prue, a retired police officer (in the British days educated hillmen were encouraged to join government service). This gentleman had announced his intention to stand for the provincial assembly south constituency. This comprised the whole of the Bohmong territory and the southern portion of the Chakma territory including some solid Bengali concentrations of voters in the hydel station at Kaptai and the paper mill at Chandraghona. The rivalry between the two was longstanding, dating back to the time when the present Chief was a Welfare Officer in government service. He continued in government service until he succeeded to the Bohmong Raj in 1959, on the death of his half-brother, the redoubtable old Bohmong Kyaw Jaw San Prue. Both Maung Shwe Prue and Aung Shwe Prue put forward their claims to the office and dignity of the Bohmong. Succession is regulated in the Bohmong Raj family by seniority in age amongst the closest kinsmen. In point of fact Aung Shwe Prue's age was shown incorrectly in his service record, both the rivals having been born in 1915. On the basis of service records both having been born in the same year, Maung Shwe Prue was the senior in age, and so he became the Bohmong. He died on 15 June 1996 and Aung Shwe Prue succeeded him as the fifteenth Chief on 19 November 1998. Aung Shwe Prue's father was Kumar Thwe Aung Prue and his mother's name was Kumari Hla Moh Shang. His first wife Kumari Cho Mra Prue died at the age of 42 and his second, Bohmong Rani Abai Prue at the age of 76. The new Mong Raja, incidentally, was formally installed, after a prolonged battle of succession with the Manikcheri branch of the family, a good 14 years after the death of the last Mong Raja in 1984.

In 1970, while I was preparing my election campaign and holding a number of meetings with my advisers and supporters, I received an offer from Fazlul Qader Chowdhury, the "Tiger" of Chittagong. He was the Convention Muslim League Chief after President Ayub Khan resigned. He was also Ayub's one-time cabinet minister and later Speaker of the National Assembly. Some jokingly used to refer to him as the Loudspeaker, because of his stentorian voice. From the time he campaigned for Union Board membership, in the days of the British Raj, he had never lost an election. Many years ago this burly sixfooter with his strident voice and

domineering presence, when he spoke at a public meeting as a candidate whose symbol was a date palm, he threatened his Chittagonian voters. "If you fellows don't vote for me," he said, "I'll spike each and every one of you with the thorns of the date palm." He was a young lawyer but his passion got the better of his professional caution. The Chittagonians adored their rough and tough leader. Even if he was a bit of a rough diamond he was one of the ablest and bravest of Bengali politicians and a staunch Muslim Leaguer.

When he was Minister for Agriculture in the Central Government in 1963, and I was the elected member from the Hill Tracts to the Provincial Assembly, he had rung me at Rangamati to ask if I would like to go to the World Food Congress at Washington D.C.. I had said, "Yes, thanks." Earlier, immediately after the elections he had asked me if I would like him to put in a word for me to President Auyb for a provincial ministership. I had said, "No, thanks." I would have been one in any case but another minister, Waheeduzzaman, had persuaded Ayub to disregard my nomination in favour of his nominee to whom he was beholden, for ministership in the minority slot in the East Pakistan provincial cabinet.

Then, on my suggestion, Governor Ghulam Faruque had agreed to form a "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Authority" under me. Unfortunately the proposal was shot down. Now in 1970, Fazlul Qader Chowdhury wanted me to take the Muslim League ticket in the coming elections. He also offered one hundred thousand rupees for my election expenses, as initial help. Shortly thereafter President Yahya froze the huge Muslim League bank accounts. After the fall of Dhaka on 16 December 1971, Fazlul Qader Chowdhury was imprisoned by the Bangladesh government. Like Suhrawardy, the founder of the Awami League, Fazlul Qader believed in justice for East Pakistan and maximum autonomy, but neither of the two believed in the break up of Pakistan. While in prison, it is said, he sent a message to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had promised the people Shonar Bangla – Bengal of gold. Fazlul Qader's message was, "While you pave the surface of Bangladesh with gold, please leave six feet uncovered for me." He died in prison.

Now I was also sounded out by another faction of the Muslim League and by two or three other political parties (more than a dozen political parties contested). The Awami League also put out feelers. We had, however, decided that I would contest as an independent candidate and so I politely refused all offers. (While on the subject of offers I may mention that shortly after I had returned from Argentina in 1996, President Leghari dismissed the Benazir government. Syeda Abida Hussain (Chandi) who was made a Minister had offered me the Chairmanship of the Council for Social Welfare, with the rank of Minister of State. I had said, "Thanks, but no thanks." The conversation took place around her breakfast table. Only Chandi, her husband Syed Fakhar Imam, former Speaker of the National Assembly and before that Minister for Education, and myself were present.

These none too garrulous quasi monosyllabic replies are perhaps involuntary Taurean impulses. I understand that a Taurean actor Cary Grant or someone else of

that vintage was asked in an interview if it was true that he had started acting at age X. "Yup", he replied. The second question was whether it ws true that he had acted in X number of films. "Yup", came the reply. After a few more questions elicited similar monosyllabic responses, the interviewer asked, "Are you dumb?" The equally prompt reply was, "Nope." The interview ended.

The Bohmong's stand underwent a number of changes. In a meeting with his headmen he had decided to support me for the national, and Aung Shwe Prue for the provincial south constituency. He was not concerned with the provincial north where he had very little influence. Subsequently, at another meeting, he decided to stand for the south provincial assembly. This naturally generated some hard feelings in Aung Shwe Prue as well as in some of the leading headmen of Banderban Area. Thereupon the Bohmong somersaulted to the decision to try for the national assembly seat.

Some days later he came to see me, feeling very sheepish, for he had earlier written to me, offering me his support. He was in three minds: not to contest, to contest for the provincial, to try for the national. I told him he was losing time and would have difficulty in catching up with me if he decided to opt for the national. I also told him that Aung Shwe Prue had written, and also called on me, asking for my support. I had informed him I would support the candidate chosen by him and the Bohmong together. Aung Shwe Prue had complained to me bitterly about the contradictory stand of the vacillating Chief, which of course, I forbore from mentioning to the Bohmong.

He promised to think over the matter and let me know. Finally he opted for the national assembly seat and Aung Shwe Prue supported the Bohmong and not me. He had no option, and under pressure he could not do otherwise if he wanted not to jeopardize his own chances. Although I knew what was going on I continued to support Aung Shwe Prue quite openly in my area. To do otherwise would have enhanced the chances of the Awami League candidate, Syedur Rahman, the head of the small Awami League party in the Hill Tracts. To make matters more complicated, Gyanendu Chakma from the younger group had also become a candidate in this provincial assembly south constituency, although the combined Bengali and Marma votes were more than the Chakma votes.

In essence politics is the welfare of people and in ensuring justice and fair play. It was a matter of justice and not of race or religion that in this instance it was necessary not to vote for Gyanendu although he was a Chakma. Almost 11 years ago on 2 January 1960, in the first basic democracies elections, it was just and fair to support the Bengali candidate, Syedul Haque from Puranbasti in Rangamati for the Union Council seat rather than a hillman. Not only did I urge the hillpeople to cast their votes for him but insisted that my wife and mother and even my aged grandmother Rani Ramamayee go personally to the polling booth at the Rani Dayamayee School and cast their votes. Syedul Haque had won with a vast majority.

It was obvious that should Gyanendu Chakma obtain a good number of the Chakma votes then due to the division of the jumma votes, the Awami League candidate would romp home with flying colours. Syedur Rahman had declared that when he got into the provincial assembly he would demand the complete merger of the Hill Tracts with the plains as a regulated district. He would advocate annulment of the safeguards of the hillmen and throw open the gates of the Hill Tracts to all citizens, meaning of course fellow plainsmen. Aung Shwe Prue, also an independent candidate, was very grateful for my support, not unnaturally, especially in view of the fact that he did not support me and he knew I was aware of this. He won the elections and was made a minister in Dr. Malek's cabinet. After the fall of Dhaka in December 1971, along with Governor Dr. Malek, he was imprisoned in Bangladesh. Years later, he became a Minister of State in Bangladesh.

Charu Bikash Chakma, one of the first to urge me to stand for the National Assembly, because according to him no one else could lead the Hill Tracts, was a secret aspirant to Awami League nomination for this seat. One evening he came to see me with Manabendra Narayan Larma, an independent candidate for the provincial north constituency and Gyandendu Chakma, the candidate for the south. Larma, who had the support of the student community, had been arrested on 10 February 1963 and jailed by the provincial government for so called "communist and subversive activities." Though intellectually his political gurus were Marx, Engels and Mao the real reason for his incarceration had been because he had distributed leaflets calling upon the people to rise up in revolt against the government and stop the Karnafuli dam. He was then a student of Chittagong College. He finished his studies and took his law degree while in prison.

I had been told Manabendra Larma was an opinionated hothead but I liked him instantly. He had vision and a grasp of the problems of the Hill Tracts. And he seemed able to sift the essentials from inessentials. Manabendra was forthright and enthusiastic and the light of freedom and the determination to fight for it was evident in him. With experience he would make a first class leader and be a real asset to the Hill Tracts cause. With an ally like him we could fight with two strings to the bow. These were my thoughts and impressions but in the deep evening twilight on the terrace overlooking the lake I told them I could not agree with their proposals. They wanted me to support them in the provincial seats in return for their support in the national, to act as a three-man team in fact. They also advocated collecting subscriptions from the people for a joint campaign fund. The people were almost starving and I had no heart to ask them for funds. I also knew that in the process of raising subscriptions, often funds were misused.

Some of the young men and students were disappointed in my supporting Aung Shwe Prue rather than Gyanendu Chakma, the candidate they had put forward. They argued that the Bohmong had broken his word, and Aung Shwe Prue in league with him was supporting him and not me. So in the face of such inexcusable conduct why should I support one of them rather than my own fellow-Chakma? To support the Chakma candidate I explained would merely ensure the success of the Awami

League candidate in the south constituency. I showed them the communal composition of the voters and advised them to withdraw the candidate. They did not do so. Fortunately very few Chakmas voted for this candidate and took my advice and supported Aung Shwe Prue.

In 1970, a week or so before the date for filing nomination papers I received a telegram from Sheikh Mujibur Rahman requesting me to see him in Dhaka. Mujib's Dhanmandi residence, not far from Angus Hume's across the lake, was full of milling political workers and hangers-on. Some of them, sensing his inevitable rise to power, tried to get in on the ground floor as the saying goes, though most were genuine in their faith in him. I was made to sit in an anteroom for about five minutes and then ushered into his drawing room. He had got rid of most of the people and only two or three of his cronies were present when I went in. Mubjib came forward and greeted me warmly. We had tea and after some exchange of pleasantries he asked about conditions in the Hill Tracts.

I told him the economic condition of the people was bad. They had not recovered from the shock of the displacement due to the Kaptai dam. But what they were most concerned about now was their constitutional and administrative safeguards. He said when his party came to power he would develop the area. I mentioned the potentials of the Tracts and reiterated that for real development the people must participate in their own affairs. In order to ensure that and to put a stop to the exploitation of the backward hillpeople by the sophisticated plainsmen we needed protection. "We want a separate status for the Hill Tracts," I repeated, "and safeguards in the constitution."

"Progress is what you need, Raja Sahib," he cut in. "And development. I promise you I will help in development." Then, with a big smile he suddenly said, "Why don't you join my party?"

"We don't understand party politics too well, Sheikh Sahib", I said. "I'm very grateful for your offer but I've declared myself as an independent and if I now changed people wouldn't appreciate it."

After that, I once more asked for his views on constitutional safeguards for the Tracts, which he evaded. In turn he made another attempt to get me to take his party nomination, which I politely refused. He asked about the provincial assembly candidates and I gave him my assessment: Manabendra Narayan Larma would win in the north, and Aung Shwe Prue in the south. After some more conversation he said he would not put up any candidate against me and wished me success. I expressed my thanks and left.

Subsequently, for the price of not setting up a candidate against me he wanted my support for his provincial candidates, and a veiled assurance that I would go by his party's wishes (this was rather vague). We discussed this with my advisers and rejected it because we had decided to support Aung Shwe Prue in the south. To support the Awami League's Bengali candidate, who in any case stood a good

chance, would be to dig our political grave. The candidate had advocated openly he wanted the Tracts to be a regulated district with no special status, as I mentioned earlier.

In retaliation Mujib set up Charu Bikash Chakma against me for the National Assembly seat. Manabendra, Gyanendu and Charu formed a team. Charu Bikash's electioneering speeches, by and large, were fair and he did not oppose me in public meetings, only offered his views. He had no backing from the hillmen. But the Bengalis voted for him solidly. Many government officials, by law supposed to be neutral, canvassed for him. The deputy commissioner, on his behalf, tried to suborn as well as coerce some of the hillmen leaders on the quiet.

Gyanendu's supporters were some misguided students. Many realized that to support him would be to elect the Awami League candidate and remained passive. A few students supported Charu Bikash. The majority were for Manabendra in the provincial north and for me in the National Assembly constituency. In the north the Awami League candidate was my uncle, Kumar Kokonadaksha Roy. Being bound by party discipline he would not, if elected, be able to demand autonomy for the Tracts. Therefore supporting him would be merely on the grounds of kinship. It was awkward but we proceeded as far as the north constituency was concerned, and the majority here were Chakmas, to remain neutral.

The hillpeople felt this was the last chance to realize constitutionally their dream of meaningful regional autonomy. This meant managing all internal affairs with Currency, Defence (against external enemies) and Foreign Affairs being managed by the Central Government. They preferred direct central rule in place of the odious provincial administration. They had three candidates to choose from for the National Assembly. It was also, most importantly, to be the Constituent Assembly as per Yahya Khan's Legal Framework Order on which the holding of the elections was based. One was the nominee of the Awami League, Charu Bikash, the other two independents were both chiefs – the Chakma and the Bohmong, all three were hillmen. After a hectic election campaign, involving numerous public meetings and journeys through the length and breadth of the largest constituency in the province, polling took place on 7 December 1970.

There were hilarious incidents in the hillpeoples' casting of votes. Some left the ballot papers beside the box. A few stamped the seal on the reverse of the ballot paper (over two thousand of my votes were invalidated on this score alone). A small number drew an elephant, my symbol, on the ballot paper. One young woman came out of the booth and addressed the Presiding Officer. "Where is the elephant?" she asked, looking for my symbol. "It's an empty room." She expected boxes with candidates' symbols on them, as had been the case in a previous provincial election.

That they believed in me, trusted me, they had already proved by electing me whenever I sought their vote. The basic democrats had elected me overwhelmingly in 1962 to the Provincial Assembly, then unanimously as the Vice Chairman of the

District Council (the Deputy Commissioner being ex-officio Chairman) and then voted me unopposed to a second term in the Provincial Assembly. And in the final National Assembly elections on the basis of adult franchise, the Jumma people of all the indigenous communities gave their verdict overwhelmingly in my favour against heavy odds, against threats, coercion and intimidation. The combined total of the other two candidates was less than mine by twenty thousand votes. In the final outcome Aung Shwe Prue won, the Awami League candidate was a very close second, while Gyanendu Chakma was left at the starting post. He was a young lawyer with noble aspirations and I felt sorry for him but the situation warranted support of the Marma candidate. In any case Gyanendu was in his twenties and he could try again. In the provincial north, Manabendra Narayan Larma won – all three of us were independents. The people's verdict was loud and clear and the mandate was: "We want direct central administration, and not Bengali rule. We want an end to oppression. We want autonomy."

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League made the Six Points the basis of their election campaign. In the process they infused into the Bengali masses a deep hatred toward all West Pakistanis and non-Bengalis, who were termed exploiters and parasites. All sorts of allegations were levelled against them. Bengali nationalism was fanned on the basis of unmitigated hatred. Mujib's supporters took recourse to strongarm tactics and prevented other political parties from freely holding public meetings. A meeting of the Jammat-I-Islami, organized on 18 January 1970 at the historic Paltan Maidan in Dhaka, was attacked by an organized mob of Awami Leaguers resulting in injuries to about 500 persons. Within a week of this incident another public meeting organized by the Pakistan Democratic Party was violently disrupted. Awami Leaguers attacked the office of the Jammat-I-Islami in Dhaka on 22 January and smashed the furniture, removed the signboard, and set the party papers, documents and flag on fire. Offices of newspapers that had refused to toe the Awami League line were attacked and ransacked. Incidents of violence like these continued till the elections.

The government did not intervene and assumed the role of a silent and passive spectator. Perhaps President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan felt that any kind of intervention, even for restoring law and order, would invite allegations of partisanship against his government. And he wanted not only to remain absolutely neutral but to appear to be so as well. As a consequence violence spiralled and intimidation of the non-Awami Leaguers increased. The provisions of the LFO (Legal Framework Order) were violated with impunity and tension and a sense of impending tragedy loomed in the air. The President's political and administrative paralysis, despite being the head of a Martial Law government, encouraged the Awami League into believing that Yahya was afraid of it and so it could do what it pleased.

Elections had been fixed for 5 October but they had to be postponed to 7 December due to heavy floods in August and September that played havoc with the Province. A great many people lost their lives, homes were destroyed and cattle

washed away by the thousand. Had the elections been held as scheduled, the percentage of attendance in polling stations would have been minimal, as the flood-affected people could not have exercised their franchise. Another calamity befell East Pakistan in the second week of November. This time it was a catastrophic cyclone, accompanied by a tidal bore that caused unprecedented devastation. It was the greatest natural disaster of modern times in which, according to some estimates, three to five million persons lost their lives.

There was a demand from all political parties, except the Awami League, to further postpone the elections. Sheikh Mujib, however, strongly opposed any such move. Elections were held as scheduled except in the cyclone affected areas where polling took place a month later, in January 1971. The Awami League had contested a few constituencies in the Western Wing but could not win a single seat. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged victorious in West Pakistan. It could not secure a single seat from East Pakistan. The elections threw up two political parties, both purely regional in composition, if not in outlook. The stage had been set for framing the constitution within 120 days, under which powers would be transferred to the people's elected representatives.

According to the 1961 census, on the basis of which the 1970 elections were held, the population of Pakistan was 93,831,982; of this East Pakistan was 50,853,721 and West Pakistan 42,978,261. 88% of the population was Muslim and 12% non-Muslim. In East Pakistan the Hindus constituted just under 19%, in West Pakistan only 1.5%. In the whole of Pakistan Hindus constituted slightly less than 10%, Christians 0.80%, Buddhists 0.40%, others 0.05%.

In a stunning victory, the Awami League won 160 out of the 162 National Assembly seats of East Pakistan. I was one of only two non Awami League candidates that won seats in the elections. In West Pakistan not a single seat was won by a non-Muslim. In the whole of Pakistan, therefore, I was the one and only non-Muslim successful candidate to the National Assembly. The number of successful women candidates was minimal. This leads one to the ineluctable conclusion that we need joint electorates but also reserved seats for the minorities as also for women in the National Assembly, the Senate and the provincial assemblies of Pakistan, (and in the sole legislature of Bangladesh).

After the elections I had a meeting with my advisers to decide on a plan of action. Mujib having offered only "development" but no safeguards, protection or special status for the Hill Tracts, we felt that our only hope lay in Chairman Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party and President Yahya Khan. I knew the latter quite well. He was upright, genial, bluff and jolly. When he was the General Officer Commanding the 14th Division in Dhaka, along with friends, I sometimes used to bundle him into his car and send him home from the Dhaka Club when he had had one too many. Once, on a visit to Rangamati, after dinner at the Rajbari he had got up and spontaneously joined in the indigenous dance put up in his honour. Though a *bon vivant* by reputation, of his probity there had never been a negative whisper.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Chairman of the PPP, as Foreign Minister, had been my leader at the UN General Assembly session in 1964. He was undoubtedly the most dynamic of the country's politicians and no stranger to me either. I decided to apprise him of our problems and our aspirations. I flew to Lahore and stayed with my friend, the Srinagar born Kashmiri Syed Afzal Agha, the erstwhile Deputy Commissioner, and his family. He was now the Chief Secretary of the Punjab, having served as Chief Secretary of West Pakistan before one unit was dissolved by President Yahya in 1969 and the provinces reverted to their former position. I stayed from 27 December to 3 January. Bhutto was touring West Pakistan and was not likely to be in Lahore in a while. However, I met some of the People's Party MNAs who promised to help the Hill Tracts cause.

In Dhaka I called on the senior politician Nurul Amin, the only other non-Awami League successful candidate. He was a pre-partition Muslim League leader, who had also been Chief Minister of East Pakistan when the Bengali language movement had taken place in 1952 and was now President of the Pakistan Democratic Party. He was not too happy with the situation and visualized trouble. On 4 January I went to call on Sheikh Mujib again at his Dhanmandi residence. He received me even more effusively than he had done before the elections. However, whenever I broached the subject of the constitutional status of the Hill Tracts he would shy away and talk of democracy and development. Though Mujib was not enthusiastic about constitutional safeguards for the Hill Tracts, when I pinned him down to a definite answer on the issue he asked me to go and see his law and constitutional expert Dr. Kamal Hossein.

The latter was also polite but lukewarm. Dr. Hossain (subsequently detained with Sheikh Mujib in Pakistan, and later Foreign Minister of Bangladesh) was a successful lawyer, and his partner in the law firm Haidermota, was my lawyer. I had met Kamal Hossein occasionally at cocktail parties. He was broadminded and liberal. His wife was from Sindh and was the sister of Iqbal Akhund, one of Pakistan's best diplomats. Kamal Hossein, however, was a newcomer to politics and the Awami League. I explained the Hill Tracts case and he said some soothing words but nothing substantive. I knew that though he meant well the pressure of his party politicians would not permit Kamal Hossain to do anything substantial for us, even if Mujib had been sympathetic. And Mujib's attitude did seem to fall short of that. Many years later, when asked to comment on the protracted guerrilla war in the Tracts, according to newspaper reports Kamal Hossain said he had thought that the provisions for minorities as a whole in the constitution would suffice for the Hill Tracts. He had not envisioned the need for specific provisions for the indigenous people of the Hill Tracts. That is what he said.

CHAPTER XXXV

Failed parleys and postponement of N.A. Session

The Awami League, essentially a rightist party, was gradually slipping into the hands of extremist Bengali nationalists. These elements included a large majority of students who spearheaded the Awami League election campaign and the middle level politicians who egged on the man on the street. The factory workers and the urban labour population generally were followers of the firebrand leftist leader Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani who was totally routed in the elections. Now all the groups seemed to have dissolved their shades of differences and merged as ultranationalists. They wanted, at any cost, a constitution based totally on the Six Points. Mujib perhaps had not realized the strength of these elements and had felt he would be able to work out a compromise on the Six Points after the elections. He had indicated privately on more than one occasion that the Six Points were negotiable. He himself was a moderate and his emotional advocacy of the Six Points was essentially aimed at securing the votes of the Bengalis, Asia's and possibly the world's most volatile and emotional people and certainly not famed for their pragmatism. Mujib's aim was maximum and meaningful autonomy with financial autarcy for East Pakistan.

The election results changed the entire situation. The landslide victory of the Awami League gave it not only a majority in East Pakistan but an absolute majority in the National cum Constituent Assembly. Mujib, though confident of winning a comfortable majority from the Eastern Wing, could not even in his wildest dreams have imagined that his party would secure such a prepoderance in the Assembly. Consequently the Awami Leaguers were now bent on ramming through a constitution based on the Six Points, in toto and unattenuated. The extremists in the Awami League gained a tremendous boost and as time passed Mujib appeared to have become like a man riding a tiger, and a prisoner of the genie he had himself raised. Mujib had played upon the jingoistic passion of the people to such an extent, and it had reached such a pitch of frenzy, that he now could find no way out of his total commitment to the Six Points. As the extremists gained strength, the demand for a constitution based on the Six Points, and immediately, gained momentum from day to day.

These demands were tantamount to independence for East Pakistan. Not only President General Yahya Khan but the Central Government establishment, consisting mainly of Punjabi civil and military politicians and bureaucrats, were also vehemently opposed to any such measure. In West Pakistan, apart from the establishment, the Six Points were not acceptable to most political parties – least of all to the majority party, the Pakistan People's Party. A careful analysis of the Six Points clearly indicates the real aim: an independent East Pakistan in the guise of autonomy. It envisaged, at best, (obviously as an interim phase) a loose confederation. The smaller provinces and political parties of West Pakistan,

understandably, were in favour of provincial autonomy but realized that the Centre could not agree to divest itself of all authority.

The People's Party took the stand that the constitution of the country should be framed through a consensus of all the federating units. A constitution forcibly imposed by any one of the five federating units on the others could not be a lasting one. Their view was that a majority party in the legislature had every right to form a government in a parliamentary system, but a constituent unit in a federation had no right to foist a constitution entirely of its own choosing on the other units. Consequently they demanded a prior assurance from the Awami League that it would not force a constitution of its own on the country and that broad points of the new constitution should be settled before the Assembly was convened. This meant Mujib's withdrawing from a position of rigidity and becoming more accommodating, and diluting some of his Six Points. But by then he had been caught up in a vortex from which he could not extricate himself, let alone control it.

Constitutional consensus outside the Assembly was all the more necessary from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's point of view, for another reason. The Legal Framework Order, which provided the legal basis on which the elections were held, stipulated that if the Assembly failed to frame a constitution within 120 days of its first sitting, it would stand dissolved. It had taken the nation about nine years to frame the 1956 constitution. Bhutto thought a period of 120 days was unreasonably short and would not allow much time for the process of give and take. He therefore wanted compromises to be effected before the first meeting of the Assembly.

Political and constitutional dialogues were held in Dhaka between Mujib and Bhutto and other West Pakistani leaders. They, however, could not reach any settlement. Mujib was adamant on having the constitution framed on the basis of the Six Points. No compromise appeared possible. The political atmosphere was still – and ominous. There was an insistent demand from East Pakistan for an early convening of the Assembly. On 13 February, Yahya Khan, who had tried but failed to promote a compromise between leaders of the two wings, summoned the Assembly to meet in Dhaka on 3 March. Two days later Zulfikar Ali Bhutto announced his party would not attend the session unless they received an assurance of a measure of reciprocity from the majority party. He declared, "I think we can work out something which will satisfy both of us. But if we are asked to go to Dhaka only to endorse the constitution which has already been prepared by the Awami League and which cannot be altered even an inch here or an inch there, then you will not find us in Dhaka." The "idhar hum, udhar tum" (I am here, you there) rhetoric was admittedly a journalist's colourful version and not Bhutto's actual words.

The crisis deepened as Mujib refused to agree to change "even a dot or a comma," of the Six Points. To do otherwise would have meant losing his popularity and causing a rift in his own party. Reduced to a cog in the wheel of passion and blind emotionalism he could not rise to the occasion as a statesman. Had he been able to do so, perhaps the horror and the carnage of war and bloodshed could have been

averted, and he could still have gained his objective; perhaps not. On 21 February, the Bengali Martyr's day, he announced, "Our stand is absolutely clear. The constitution will be framed on the basis of the Six Points." He also said should West Pakistan fail to accept in full the Six Points programme of his party, one with a clear majority in the National Assembly, he would go it alone and frame the constitution.

Bhutto addressed a mammoth public meeting in Lahore on 28 February and demanded postponement of the Assembly session. If this was not possible he asked for an amendment to the limit of 120 days for framing the constitution. He threatened a mass *hartal* (strike) throughout West Pakistan if neither of his demands was met. In such an event the Pakistan People's Party would have no option but to boycott the Assembly session. Bhutto's stand was also supported by some of the smaller political parties of West Pakistan who had won some seats in the Assembly. The deadlock was total. Pakistan was facing the worst constitutional crisis in its history. Yahya Khan was in a quandary. And time was running out. He had to decide one way or the other. He could either insist on having the session on 3 March, thus enabling the Awami League to ram its own constitution through the Assembly in the absence of the PPP and some other West Wing political parties, or he could postpone the session, thus angering the Awami League but gaining a breathing space for evolving a compromise formula. He chose postponement.

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CHAPTER XXXVI

Violence erupts

I had come to Dhaka with Arati to attend the first National Assembly session and was staying with Angus Hume and family at his Dhanmandi residence, as usual. On 1 March 1971, at about one o'clock in the afternoon I was having a beer at the Dhaka Club when the announcement postponing the National Assembly session – scheduled for the 3rd – was made over the radio. Immediately there was tension in the club. Two of the bearers (waiters), in hushed tones, informed me there would be trouble. One of them was a labour union leader who joined the Mukti Bahini later. And true enough, trouble started within an hour – processions, slogans, arson. The Naz Cinema that exclusively showed English films belonged to a non-Bengali named Dossani. He also owned the popular Gulistan Cinema and the Chu Chin Chow Chinese Restaurant in the same building at the heart of Dhaka City. All of them were burned down by the mob in the evening. Non-Bengali shops elsewhere too were looted.

Most of these non-Bengalis were Urdu-speaking refugees from India, mainly from U.P., Bihar, Hyderabad (Deccan) and Bombay that had settled in East Pakistan, the majority having settled in West Pakistan, mainly in Karachi. They had little or no particular links with West Pakistanis save a common religion and the shared Urdu language. Actually for the people of West Pakistan the first or mother tongue was the provincial, regional or tribal language, and Urdu was the lingua franca. But the Urdu speaking non-Bengalis in East Pakistan whom the Bengalis collectively called Biharis made common cause in that they were against the secession of East Pakistan.

As a result of various clashes between Bengalis and non-Bengalis, about 150 persons were taken to hospital on this day, 1 March. Quite a few of them died subsequently. On 2 March, there was a complete general strike or *hartal* in the city. Gangs of youngsters and volunteers roamed the streets shouting slogans, carrying banners and ensuring that every house flew a black flag. There were long queues outside cloth shops for black material as no one wanted to be beaten up by the students and Awami League cadres. There were further lootings, resulting in shooting by the army. Curfew was clamped down at 8 pm, but there were violations and we heard rifle shots at night.

The department store Razzak's, that also had a tailoring department, was looted. Only two days earlier I had purchased a midnight blue threepiece suit length for Rs. 143 and had given it to them. Some days later I collected my suit. The mob had looted the shop but left the tailoring department with its piles of unfinished cloth intact. On 3 March many slogan-chanting processions were taken out and acts of vandalism and arson continued, particularly against non-Bengalis. About 120 dead and wounded were taken to the Medical College Hospital. There was a total strike

from 7 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon, after which Mujib addressed a large gathering at Paltan Maidan. He made a fiery speech refusing President Yahya's invitation to 12 MNAs including himself to meet him. Lawlessness spread all over East Pakistan.

On the night between 3 and 4 March a violent mob of Awami Leaguers attacked Ferozeshah Colony in Chittagong and set it on fire. About 700 houses were gutted that one night, burning some of the inmates to death. Some of those who tried to escape were mercilessly killed or seriously wounded. More than 300 non-Bengalis lost their lives in Chittagong during the night. The trouble spread to Khulna, an important industrial town and an inland river port. There fiftyseven persons were killed by the Awami Leaguers on 5 March. The armed mobs looted shops and set fire to a hotel that belonged to a non-Bengali. Incidents of killing, looting, arson and rape on a large scale were reported from all over East Pakistan.

The law and order situation had gone out of hand and there was no security. Chaos abounded everywhere in the province. People flew black flags. There were *hartals* and acts of violence. Curfew, its defiance, shooting, cases of large-scale murders and lynching of non-Bengalis – chiefly the "Biharis" (Indian Muslim refugees) – these became an everyday occurrence. This was Mujib's "non-violent non-cooperation movement," of a genre and style the preceptor, Mahatma Gandhi, would have found difficulty in recognizing. President Yahya spoke to the nation over Radio Pakistan on 5 March, castigating Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the East Pakistani leadership for not only defying the government but for the violence and terrorism they had unleashed. He announced the National Assembly would meet on 25 March.

Two days later – on the 7th – Sheikh Mujib held a mammoth public meeting at the Race Course ground, the same place where the ceremonial surrender of the Pakistan Eastern Command would take place on 16 December, nine months and unimaginable horrors later. Mujib spelt out four conditions on the fulfilment of which, he said, he would consider joining the postponed National Assembly session. These were:

i) Withdrawal of Martial Law;
ii) Return of soldiers to barracks;
iii) An inquiry into the recent killings of citizens by the Armed Forces; and
iv) Transfer of power to civilians.

Yahya refused to accede to the demands or to make any concessions, so Mujib announced a weeklong programme for continuing his version of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. His directives forbade government officials from attending offices and declared the continued closure of educational institutions and courts, including the High Court of Dhaka. Banks were ordered not to effect any remittances to the Western Wing either through the State Bank or otherwise. Tax

Collectors were instructed not to collect any taxes or dues. Mujib asked for setting up of *Sangram Parishad* (Revolutionary Councils) at the Union, Mohalla, Thana, sub-Division and District levels under the leadership of the Awami League. Without any formal declaration of independence Mujib had virtually set up a parallel government in East Pakistan. The writ of the Cenral Government had no validity in the province any more. The sanction behind Mujib's directives was not merely his undisputed leadership but violence and the threat of violence by his armed Awami League cadres. The police were helpless. The Army, a *bete noir* to Bengalis, mostly remained in their barracks. Yahya Khan perhaps had hoped to tide over the crisis with a political solution but his inflexibility matched Mujib's and the situation only got worse.

Trains ran only on orders from Mujib and there was no semblance of a schedule or timetable. We managed to get reservations on the Chittagong Mail train for the evening of 8 March. Those of the hill girl students from Dhaka University and the Medical College that were still in Dhaka came away with us. On the 9th morning we were in Chittagong and after lunch we left for Rangamati.

President Yahya made a last effort to save the situation. He decided to visit Dhaka to negotiate a way out of the impasse with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. When Mujib learnt about the President's proposed visit he said, "The President will be our guest" – a subtle way of telling the President that he was merely a visitor to East Pakistan. Yahya Khan arrived in Dhaka on 15 March and was welcomed by Mujib who, however, undeterred, issued fresh directives for running his de facto government. The Pakistan National Flag was brought down and burnt at hundreds of places. Photographs of Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and the Father of the Nation, were trampled upon and burnt by the mob. The Awami League designed a new flag for *shadhin Bangla* (Independent Bengal) and asked people to fly it. One could see thousands of such flags flying from every rooftop, every shop – even on cars, buses and rickshaws.

23 March – Pakistan Day – celebrated by Pakistanis in commemoration of the Pakistan Resolution passed in Lahore in 1940 – was declared "Resistance Day" by Mujib. On this day all Pakistan Flags were brought down and Bangladesh flags ceremoniously hoisted. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took the salute at an armed march-past of Awami Leaguers where the Bangladesh flag was ceremoniously raised. This was more than open rebellion. It was a call to civil war that resulted in bloodshed and human misery of unimaginable dimensions. However, he stopped short of a unilateral declaration of independence.

Talks between President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman continued till 24 March. Their deputies also met in an attempt to untangle the mess. These parleys were joined by Bhutto and some other West Pakistani leaders who had come to the provincial metropolis. Some of them also conferred separately with the President and Sheikh Mujib. The Awami League by then had raised their demand to setting up of two separate Constitutional Committees for drafting two separate

constitutions, one for West Pakistan and the other for East Pakistan. This was a step beyond the six Points. It appeared that the Awami League's strategy was to demand so much that there could be no agreement with the leaders of the Western Wing, and Yahya's was to seek a dilution of the six points, and failing that, to gain time for a military takeover of East Pakistan.

No compromise could be worked out as Yahya would not relent and the Awami League proved adamant, with a stance that said: "Take it or leave it." On the 24th evening the Awami League announced, "So far as we are concerned we placed all our viewpoints before the meeting. From our side there is no need for further meetings." In the meantime, lawlessness and incidents of loot, arson, rape and murder continued unabated. Violence accelerated with the participation or encouragement of the East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles and the Police, all of whom had by now overtly switched their loyalty to Mujib. Armed infiltrators and saboteurs were also believed to be coming in from India.

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Outside the new Rangamati Rajbari: Rani Arati with the children (Left to right) Rajkumari Chandra, Kumar Sivasish, Rajkumari Troya, Rani Arati, Kumar Indrasish, Kumar Devasish. (confronting trials and tribulations with fortitude, circa 1972)

CHAPTER XXXVII

Excesses committed

The lid blew off the top on 25 March 1971. The army cracked down on Dhaka and thus began a full-fledged civil war all over East Pakistan. The Special Services Group, a commando unit under Brigadier, then Lt.Col., Z.A. Khan, was entrusted with the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Major in charge of this operation, who was later posted to the Hill Tracts, subsequently died in action in Chandpur during the war with India in December. He told us Mujib had not tried to evade arrest but some of his supporters had. Barricades had been erected on the road, all the way from the Army HQ in Kurmitola to Mujib's house in Dhanmandi. Z.A. Khan has written about some of his experiences, in his book, "The way it was."

At Rangamati, on the 26th morning, the senior Bengali government officers ordered people to plant wooden stakes and pile up stones wherever there was an expanse of open ground in an effort to prevent army helicopters from landing. During the day many of our relatives came across to the new Rajbari, built on an island in the newly formed lake in 1960, with conflicting radio reports and a discordant medley of rumours they had picked up in and around town. At the northern end of the rose garden behind the house overlooking the placid blue lake, I had had a bamboo house constructed some months before. It was a restful niche that I sheltered in occasionally. I would sit on the veranda in the evenings and watch the boats with the backdrop of the Bandukkonamon hill piercing the northeastern skies in the distance. The peak is located on the border of the khas mauza Bandukbhanga, which had many childhood memories like Rajbilash. Some years back, before the dam was built, with a group I had enjoyed an invigorating climb to the peak. It is called Jomochok after the matted haired recluse Jom who lived there alone with the birds and the bees — and prowling panthers.

That evening we had a meeting with the elders in that hut. Some counselled immediate evacuation of the women and children to the interior, others advised we wait and see. Angus Hume, with us on a visit, had gone on a deer hunt for the day with his two sons Noel and Michael and my twelve-year old son and heir Devasish. They returned at dusk and he joined the discussion. There was a fear of the army aggressively occupying Rangamati. Rumour had it that they were barbaric and did not discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. They shot first and asked questions later. On the other hand, the mounting tension and the increasing lawlessness and violence of the rebel Bengali forces promised no safety to anyone. The general feeling was one of apprehension or depression and pessimism. We posted a number of extra guards at night and awaited developments. I told our relatives they were all welcome to shift to the island. Their houses being located beside the main Chittagong–Rangamati road, they understandably felt vulnerable. Some had already shifted to the island. In the next day or so the others followed suit.

Transistor radios were turned on the whole day long and there was an incessant comparing of notes, everyone trying to glean a semblance of the truth. It was difficult to sift fact from propaganda. We were continuously exposed to weird, macabre, sometimes ghoulish stories, deliberate or inadvertent. All India Radio, BBC, Australia, China, Moscow, Voice of America, all endlessly poured fourth conflicting reports. The first TV station had been set up in Lahore on 26 November 1964. It was a pilot station set up by Nippon Electric Company of Japan and its radius was only 40 km. At the end of December a similar unit was set up in the Dhaka Improvement Trust (D.I.T.) building. As there were no television facilities and consequently no TV sets in the Hill Tracts, we were spared the additional tension of visual intimidation.

Major Ziaur Rahman, a rebel officer of the East Bengal Regiment and his Mukti Bahini took over the Chittagong Radio Station at Kalurghat on 26 or 27 March, a day or so after the military crackdown. Ziaur Rahman broadcast over Betar Bangla (Radio Bangladesh) a moving message urging Bengalis to rise up against the occupying Pakistani forces with whatever weapons they could find at hand. Shortly after, the Pakistan army confronted him and he had to flee into the Hill Tracts. He took shelter in the abandoned old site of Union Council Chairman Dharma Mohan Karbari's old homestead in Bandukbhanga mauza, which had become detached due to the Kamafuli Dam.

One morning at around 11:00 he and his followers were attacked by a combined group of Mizos, who were fighting for an independent Mizoram in India, and Pakistani soldiers. Rahman and his 101 soldiers abandoned their camp and many soldiers who had weapons threw them into the lake and swam to safety. They fled to the north along the road near Khulyangpara of Maischari Mauza. Most were in shorts and singlets (undershirts). Eyewitnesses confirmed that they saw only one rifle among the lot while they were on the run. At the border of the Chakma territory with the Mong, there is a hill stream called Kamalchari, a tributary of the Chengi. A Chakma by the name of Kanti carried Ziaur Rahman piggyback across the stream. The local people helped the others to cross over to Mahalchari. To help the underdog and save lives of people on the run is typical of the hillman's character. When Zia was in Khagrachari, few miles north of Mahalchari, he took some goods on credit from a Chakma shopkeeper, then crossed over to Tripura in India with his rag-tag army.

Months later, he returned victorious to Bangladesh and subsequently became a Major General and later the President of the nation and the founder of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). It is believed that he repaid his debts with a bonus. It is also said that at meetings with his top aides he often advocated a soft line against the hillpeople but his advice was often disregarded by the hawks. His conscience could not have been at ease at the excesses and atrocities being committed against the unarmed hillmen while contending with the guerrilla war that Larma had launched, especially when they had saved his life and that of his followers free and gratis, and provided him succour when he was a fugitive on the run.

On 25/26 March the Pakistan government expelled the foreign journalists from the Intercontinental Hotel where they were putting up and asked them to leave East Pakistan, thereby antagonizing the news media. Heroic deeds of the *Mukti Bahini* (freedom fighters) were broadcast from a clandestine radio, "Sadhin (independent) Bangladesh." At regular intervals it issued forth reports of gruesome army atrocities, interspersed with martial music and a new national anthem. One day the radio announced that the "Butcher of Bengal," had been killed by freedom fighters. Tikka Khan, head of the Pakistan Army in Dhaka from 6 March 1971 to 11 April 1971, (and Governor upto September 1971, when Dr. Malik tookover), had earned the unsavoury sobriquet pretty promptly. They also broadcast stories of girl students at Dhaka heroically hurling themselves under advancing tanks with anti-tank mines strapped to their bodies. Both the stories proved later to be wishful thinking but they laid it on thick and aroused Bengali emotions. Every now and again people fleeing from Chittagong would bring a fresh spate of stories of army loot, arson and rape. There were reports of thousands fleeing the country to India to escape murder and mayhem.

After the army occupied Chittagong in early April 1971, there was pandemonium in the port city. My uncle Kumar Utpalaksha, who had retired from service in the Court of Wards, was looking after his Bengali Hindu son-in-law Dulal Kar's confectionary shop Kar & Co. below the Chittagong Court Hill, with his two teenaged sons. The first son of Raja Bhuvan by his second Rani, Utpalaksha had also married an outsider, like his two elder half brothers. His wife from Calcutta had a Bengali father and a Caucasian American mother. It is reported by people in the locality that some soldiers took Kumar Utpalaksha and his two teenaged sons away. They were never seen or heard from again. It is an example of the grossest human rights violations attributed to some members of the Pakistani military.

In Rangamati, from 26 March onward, Awami League cadres, in league with the rebel Police and the East Pakistan Rifles, began rounding up the "Biharis". They put a few in jail, and murdered the others in cold blood. A rebel group of the paramilitary East Pakistan Rifles soldiers rounded up a large group of West Pakistani women and children from the hydel station at Kaptai and shoved them onto a motor launch. They took them to Khagrachari, headquarters of the then northern Subdivision. They made the cruise leisurely. During the trip the women were successively dishonoured. After continued indignities for some days in the launch and at Khagrachari, these unfortunates were lined up beside shallow trenches and shot. One wounded man escaped into the surrounding jungles. He was sheltered and nursed to health by some hillpeople as he fled. The army had by then come in and he reported the whole ugly business. The Subdivisional Officer of Rangamati, an innocuous looking man in his fifties turned caveman, was said to have kidnapped from Kaptai a West Pakistani major's wife and violated her for three days – shared her in fact with rebel EPR soldiers – and then had her shot. These instances illustrate the excesses committed by the other side of the divide as well.

On my lands along the Chittagong-Rangamati road these elements killed the Bihari Reserve Inspector of Police. We heard gunshots in the late evening. The

following morning the bodies of his wife and ten-year-old daughter were found near the lake. The little girl lay dead with her hand across her forehead, through which she had been shot. Nuruzzaman Khan was a large-hearted Pathan contractor, who used to help all manner of people and was generally popular among the hillmen and the Bengalis. One day a group of EPR soldiers stormed into his house, tied him up and took him away. A day or two earlier, the local Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officer had asked him to surrender his firearms, assuring him of protection. In good faith he had done so. He was taken in an outboard motor boat about three miles upstream. They disembarked on a small wooded island, shot him dead and left him as he lay. Days later, after the army entered the Tracts, his Bengali wife gave his remains a decent burial.

At night we heard mysterious gunshots. They were eerie, these sudden and sporadic shots. The West Pakistanis and Biharis were being systematically liquidated. Some of them were later hunted down like wild animals in the hills – at times their pursuers setting fire to the jungles where the hunted had hid themselves. The Bengalis looked askance at the hillpeople for not joining in their foul carnage and threatened that their turn would come, after the West Pakistanis and Biharis.

Speculation was rife each morning with regard to the identity of the victims and the murderers. These atrocities shocked people to the core and the populace began deserting Rangamati, hitherto a serene little town on the hills by the lake. While the hillpeople were running away to the interior many Bengalis were arriving from the plains in busloads to evade army operations. There was a constant supply of food and firearms in commandeered trucks to the *Mukti Bahini*, comprising rebel EBR (East Bengal Regiment), EPR (East Pakistan Rifles), and the Police. These elements were fighting the Army at Chittagong and elsewhere. People were forced by Awami League cadres to pay money and rice under threat of violence. Many shopkeepers had closed shop and run away.

I had ordered people from the neighbouring mauzas to supply guards for the night – in batches of six. There was panic everywhere. All our relatives from the mainland had taken shelter with us. During the day some would go across to the mainland and then come back before nightfall. They had filled up our house, the court house and other staff quarters, even the *Nachkhana* (Durbar Hall), giving it the atmosphere of a railway station. And from here, too, many left for the greater safety of the interior. There was growing opposition, amongst the Bengalis, to the hillmen in general and to me in particular. Threats were bandied about in town – threats of dire consequences if we did not come out into the open and join them. On two separate occasions I refused to hand over our guns. We were mentally prepared for an attack on the island. We knew we had no chance against a combined attack by the *Mukti Bahini*, but we resolved to die defending ourselves. Although we posted extra guards at night on the island, there was the continuous strain and apprehension of a sudden attack. Each night we went to bed anticipating violence and death, wondering if the nightmare would ever end.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Raja's Protection

The hillpeople were generally hoping that the Bengali rebellion would be quelled. They sympathized with East Pakistan's quest for full and maximum autonomy. What they did not support was total secession through violent means. In this they were at one with many Bengalis who wanted justice and autonomy but not secession. After all, from being an increasingly potent partner in a nation that was the third largest in Asia, after China and India, to be reduced to a tiny poverty stricken overcrowded nation smaller than Nepal in territory was obviously not every Bengali's ambition or objective. On their part, the Jummas had their own future at stake. They were convinced that if the Awami League's struggle for Bangladesh succeeded the Hill Tracts would be thrown open to Bengalis who would grab their land and dishonour their women and turn them into slaves in their own habitat. Save for a few Muslim Leaguers, who in fear of being liquidated paid lip service to *Joi Bangla*, Bengalis in Rangamati were all pro-Bangladesh.

The Bengali Deputy Commissioner Taufique Imam had joined the rebels, crossed to India and held secret meetings with the Indians. He requisitioned, or rather commandeered, most government as well private motor launches and trucks. With these he transported rations, arms and ammunition as well as Indian infiltrators down from Demagri in Mizoram to Chittagong. He was also in wireless communication with the Indians. The army at Dhaka had intercepted some of these messages but this he could not have known, not that it would have made much difference. The Deputy Commissioner's doings were more or less general knowledge in Rangamati. A few days before the army arrived in mid-April, he decamped to Sabrum in Tripura just across the Feni River opposite Ramgarh with money from the National Bank of Pakistan branches in Rangamati and Kaptai. There he helped in the refugee camps inducting, training and equipping the Mukti Bahini and sending them back to East Pakistan. Kumar Kokonadaksha Roy, the Awami League candidate for the Provincial North had fled to Tripura. Imam had him arrested and incarcerated there in Tripura.

The spring and New Year Festival called Pahela *Baisakh*, to us the Bizu Festival, is held every year on 12, 13 and 14 April, all over the subcontinent and Southeast Asia. However, this year, for us there were no festivities, no joyous laughter, only a sombre suspense full of impending sorrow. A day or so later, at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I was informed that the two seniormost government officials present at Rangamati, M.M. Ali better known as Mahadev (another of Shiva's 1008 names), a portly and kindhearted gentleman supposedly resembling Shiva, and Monem Chowdhury, along with some Muslim League leaders sought permission to come across to the island to meet me. In normal times the ferryman just paddled the canoe and brought anyone across to the island, but these days he was under orders to bring no non-hillman to the island without prior approval.

They were about half a dozen. I met them in the drawing room and we all had tea. In those days there was no sugar available. *Gur* or molasses used to stand in for sugar. One of the Muslim Leaguers said he had contacted the army at Raozan, some miles outside Chittagong and vouched for the Bengali people's non-resistance if the army did not blast their way through to Rangamati. However, he said, the army was not prepared to believe the offer of non-resistance unless I guaranteed it personally. I could have sent representatives to meet the army; my father-in-law volunteered. It was a risk I could not allow others to take on my behalf. Firstly, the Mukti Bahini might open fire on them on the way to Raozan. Secondly, the army, made out to be worse than the hordes of Genghis Khan, who shot at sight as well as committed atrocities, might not accept anyone but me as I was the Chakma Raja as well as the elected leader of the Tracts. One of the visitors also was against sending representatives in my place as their bonafides might be in question.

Finally, it was decided we would go to the army the following day. And to ensure that the populace would honour our commitment we would first speak to the people in the two bazars of Rangamati. With Col Hume, my brother Johnny and others including the visitors, we crossed the lake and drove to Rangamati town. In doing this we had to override the objections of the ladies at home. Fearing for our safety, they were not keen on our mission to the bazars. It was known there were still many Mukti Bahini there.

At the Reserve Bazar the two Muslim League leaders and I addressed the people. One of them described the army takeover of Chittagong town in terrifying terms, embellishing his recital with gory details. They said the army would in any case capture Rangamati sooner or later and shuddered at the prospect, real or imagined, of gross indignities if not certain death. A chorus of terror-stricken Bengalis urged me to save them by going to the army. At the Tabalchari bazar also hundreds of people shouted pro-Pakistan slogans and entreated me to face the army on their behalf. Slogans of *zindabad* (long live) for me rent the air. It was getting dark and we knew there were *muktis* amongst the crowd. But there was no alternative. Leadership entails responsibility. I warned them if there was any sniper fire at the army then my word would have been broken. If they, the civilian population, suffered as a consequence, I was not to be held responsible.

Early next morning, 16 April perhaps, we set off for Raozan in two jeeps and a landrover. The rebels had installed some machine-guns at Ghagra, 12 miles from Rangamati. Their position was beside the Dak Bungalow (Rest House) on the top of a steep hill overlooking the junction of the Chittagong–Rangamati and the Kaptai–Chandraghona road. We were told that this outpost had been dismantled a day or two earlier and the rebels had run off to the north. But no one could vouch for its veracity. As we meandered along the tortuous road we could have been fired upon by any lurking rebel. The hills were full of jungles and trees and we were simply sitting ducks to anyone on the roadside with a rifle. Fortunately we were neither waylaid nor fired upon and reached the road barrier at Raozan, about 30 miles from Rangamati, without misadventure. At the barrier we stared at a machine-gun pointed straight up

the road at us. A *Jawan* toting a submachinegun asked a few questions and then lifted the barrier.

A Junior Commissioned Officer received us and led us into a small building. This was the office of the Captain-in-Charge. While we waited, soldiers brought us mugs of hot sweet milky tea. Later, the Captain advised us that we had better proceed to the East Bengal Regimental Centre at Nutanpara, where the army was headquartered. It was here that I had been dined in years ago as an Honorary Captain. (I was promoted to Major in 1963 on return from Washington D.C. where I had gone as a delegate to the World Food Congress.) At that time there had been only tin roofed barracks, and leopards roaming about the vicinity. Subsequently, all that had changed and there were many large buildings, parade grounds and all the appurtenances of a modern regimental centre. Among the young officers there at the time of my dining in were two subalterns that later rose to hold political office – Lt. Gen. Sardar Farooq S. Lodi who became Governor of Sind, and Major General Hossein Mohammad Ershad who seized power, promoted himself to Lt. General and later to President of Bangladesh. He was removed from office due to mass uprising against him in 1990. He formed the Jatiya Party, which is the third largest political party after the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), which too was founded by a coup making general. The first of the three of course is the Awami League, but twice it lost to the BNP in the general elections.

At Nutanpara more officers interviewed us and asked probing questions. It was apparent nobody was able to take decisions here either. We were advised to go to the Circuit House in Chittagong, which was the Martial Law Headquarters. On the way we saw the ravages of war – villages destroyed, buildings broken and charred, walls demolished. At a railway crossing a derailed train with about six bogies stared at us from a grotesque angle. The town had a desolate look. Where there should have been hustle and bustle and teeming crowds now there was nothing save emptiness and silence. The only movement was that of occasional soldiers desultorily manning their beats.

At the Circuit House we met one or two senior officers but could not find out who it was that could take a decision with regard to the manner of takeover of Rangamati. Eventually Angus Hume spotted a newly arrived General from Dhaka whom he knew. He took me over and introduced me to the General. We explained the desirability of taking over Rangamati without use of force and assured him there would be no armed resistance. After some discussion he agreed to send a young naval officer named Khan to his brother Lt. Col. Z.A. Khan at Kaptai, the one detailed for the capture of Rangamati. They were two among eight siblings, some with a brilliant record of service in the various armed forces. Armed with the General's letter, Monem Chowdhury and some others went along with the naval officer to Kaptai. The rest of us returned to Rangamati having in the nick of time been able to avert needless bloodshed, horror and destruction at Rangamati and in the Hill Tracts. We later learnt that the army had decided to attack on the following day.

On the way back, at Ranirhat, 18 miles from Rangamati, a number of very frightened people asked us when the army was going to take over these areas. They said they were suffering at the hands of the *Mukti Bahini*. We told them that the army would be coming at any moment. That evening at dusk the army, in launches and speed boats made a sort of miniature Normandy landing (the Allied landing in France on 6 June 1944) at Rangamati and swiftly took command of the situation.

The next morning a Major of the Special Services Group and a Captain, who was a Bengali doctor, came over to the island and told me the Colonel-in-Charge desired to see me. Col. Hume and I accompanied them. In that first interview with Col. Z.A. Khan, one of the first questions he asked me was why I had attended a peace committee meeting at Rangamati on 7 March. He showed me the minutes of the meeting too. This was surprising because I was in Dhaka on that date and told the Colonel so. The Special Services Group was extremely efficient and by and large in the Hill Tracts there was no harassment or oppression of the civilian population – hillmen as well as Bengalis. However, those that had taken up arms and had fought the army or committed murders were reportedly either summarily executed or, in some instances, sent to the Army Headquarters in Chittagong.

The hillpeople as well as Bengalis in the Tracts on the whole co-operated with the army. As the word spread in the plains districts that there was peace in the Tracts under the army and that no brutalities were permitted, many Bengalis came and took shelter in the Tracts and many of them blessed me for interceding with the army on their behalf whenever there was a question of harassment of the civil population, and spread the word that under the Raja's protection all were like infants in the lap of their mother.

On 11 April Lt. Gen. Niazi (neuly promoted) took over as G.O.C. of the Eastern command, while Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan continued as Governor of East Pakistan. He handed over the Governorship on 3 September 1971, to Dr. A.M. Malik, who appointed a civilian cabinet under him.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Called to Rawalpindi

I left home on 9 November 1971. Leave-taking on that morning was like that of any other time except that I exited through the south veranda where we had breakfast every morning instead of the west, the formal entrance flanked by the two stone lions that we had brought over from the old palace. After astrological calculations based on the local almanac, Kakki had sent word that I should face south when leaving the house because the *Jogini* (inauspicious heavenly body) was on the west and one could not obviously face the *Jogini* when embarking on anything important like foreign travel. She had preferred the following day for my departure but since that was considered too much of a delay, the trip on the 9th necessitated egress through the southern exit. Normally I did not bother with auspicious moments as given out in the almanac for trips but in deference to custom I did try to avoid starting on a tour on Wednesdays and also whenever possible on Saturdays. On Wednesdays even the dead are not cremated.

This trip was to South and Southeast Asian countries and would enable me to return home in about three weeks' time. I was telegraphically requested to report to the Foreign Office at Dhaka immediately. A week or so earlier I had known the trip was in the offing but for security reasons this knowledge was restricted to a few people. Major P.D. drove the jeep to Chittagong. "You're Mr. Jehangir, Chief," he said with a grin. "Security reasons." I had lunch at the Chittagong Club with some friends and soon after we drove to the airport. There was an armed soldier on the plane – provided in all passenger flights to ensure against sabotage or attempts at hijacking by the Mukti Bahini. Major Iqbal, also of the Special Services Group (SSG), accompanied me to Dhaka. When the plane was descending, with a startling suddenness he pointed at the window and said, "what's that river, Chief?" "Must be the Buriganga I suppose," I said. Later, it occurred to me that he must have been putting me through some sort of a test. I never got around to finding out how much I had scored.

The Second Capital in Dhaka was built as a sop to East Pakistan's increasingly vocal complaints against West Pakistan's concentration of economic and political power, in Ayub Khan's time. The National Assembly, again on East Pakistan's insistence, was to sit in Dhaka (instead of only at Rawalpindi/Islamabad) at least once a year. The second capital was constructed to take in the overflow and accommodate National Assembly members and staff. These were belated efforts to assuage hurt Bengali sentiments. Now, the military had taken over the second capital buildings for their own use. I was a house guest of Brigadier Aslam's, a genial host. The next evening, I was invited to a party by General "Tiger" Niazi at his house. Niazi had taken over from General Tikka Khan on 11 April 1971. It was the last big party "Tiger" Niazi held. There were about a hundred guests and some local artistes

sang Bengali and Urdu songs.The host was jolly. Some people think he's a big boozer. In point of fact he is a teetotaller, though he is known to enjoy other fleeting pleasures of life. In the evening now and again I heard the sound of exploding bombs, by courtesy of Mukti Bahini.

On the 11th the flight to Karachi was delayed and we were not airborne until after 10 p.m. However, after about fifteen minutes of flying we were told the door of the baggage compartment of the plane was faulty and off we went, back to the Dhaka airport. Not everybody believed in this innocuous explanation and helplessly waited at the lounge, yawning, reading, or in desultory conversation. Finally, we left at about 2 o'clock on the morning of 12 November. From Karachi, I flew on to Rawalpindi.

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CHAPTER XXXX

Special Envoy

I stayed at the Hotel Intercontinental and showed up at the Foreign Office for briefing. I also called on President Yahya Khan. He agreed to the demand that the Hill Tracts be a directly Federally Administered Tribal Area and so provided for in the constitution, instead of a provincially administered Tribal Area as in the 1962 constitution or the Excluded Area as in the 1956 constitution. Earlier I had called on the Law Minister, Justice Cornelius, who, however, had not been convinced, though he said he would try and have the Hill Tracts as a Tribal Area under provincial administration. He seemed wary of offending susceptibilities rather than in disagreeing with me. On instructions from President Yahya Khan he now agreed to incorporate the Hill Tracts as a Federally Administered Tribal Area in the forthcoming constitution, which was to be presented within a month. In official parlance the word Federal was often used as against the old term Central. I was happy with the outcome, a longheld dream come true, with prospects of real autonomy for the Tracts.

I was designated a Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and was armed with letters from the President, and my brief. These titles conjured up visions of two sorts: a man in a gold braided coat with a sword that clanged as he climbed the unending steps of a stately sixteenth century palace. And the second image was of a portly gentleman in coat and tails in a ballroom with elegantly bejewelled ladies with elaborate coiffures, fluttering eyelashes and handfans; lots of chandeliers, and "Tales from the Vienna Woods." None of my mental images conformed to reality. Hitherto, prospects of going abroad incorporated a pleasurable sense of anticipation. In this instance in my quest for peace the thought uppermost was – can war be avoided? Briefs are merely guidelines and limitations. Within its scope the challenge of diplomacy is vast. Unlike a bureaucrat, a diplomat cannot duck behind rules and regulations if a situation gets uncomfortable, seemingly intractable or if it is outside the scope of his brief. He must use his imagination, his presence of mind and above all his sense of humour. At times he might feel like saying – "Go to hell," or "You don't know what you're talking about." What he actually says is something like "Your Excellency is perhaps right in thinking so, but..." There is only one rule a good diplomat abides by. He doesn't tell a deliberate lie.

I had represented the country abroad before. In 1956 I had attended Buddhist conferences in Burma and India. In 1963 I had been a member of the Pakistan delegation to the World Food Congress in Washington D.C., after which we were taken on a very interesting tour of some of the southern states, including the Shenandoah valley that reminded me of the song, "Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you, away you rolling river." In the East a river is generally mighty, in the west often

a little stream by our reckoning. Later, I had proceeded on an around the world trip. Having come westward I returned eastward, via San Francisco, Honolulu, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Karachi, spending a few days at each stop. In 1964 I had been a delegate to the UN General Assembly in New York for three months.

This trip, however, was ominous and in sad circumstances. I was hoping and wishing for peace, against heavy odds. Saifuddin Leghari, a Director of the Foreign Office, accompanied me. We left Karachi for Colombo in the early hours of 25 November 1971, two days after a state of emergency had been proclaimed in Pakistan. Of the Buddhist leaders I met in Colombo, the leader of the Opposition struck me as a man of parts and of wide understanding. A few others need special mention. Dr. J.P. Malalasekera, Sir Dudley Senanayake, Sir Cyril D'Sousa, Chairman Buddhist Society and Minister of Communications, whose wife Vivian was staunchly pro-Bangladesh, and Sir Cyril Senaratne who was trying to stage a political comeback. I had met Dr. Malalasekera in New Delhi in 1956 at the Buddha Jayanti celebrations. He was a Buddhist scholar of international fame and in Sri Lanka too he was more renowned as scholar than politician. Though his attitude to the Bangladesh issue was ambivalent he threw a tea party for me and invited a number of politicians and prominent personalities.

I held a press conference after a series of meetings. The press was objective and gave me good coverage. At one of the meetings the pro-Indian faction tried to needle me. They asked about army atrocities, desecration of Buddhist monasteries and the rumoured murder of Debapriya Barua, Secretary of the Pakistan Branch of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Dhaka. I told them violence was committed both by the Army and the Mukti Bahini. I quoted the President. "When Armies fight", he had said, "they don't throw flowers at each other." It was neither original nor profound as a philosophical doctrine, but at least it was an honest statement.

I personally knew of a relative, Manotosh Dewan's 11-year old daughter, who along with other innocent passengers, had been killed by the Mukti Bahini in the Hill Tracts. She, her grandmother, and about 60 other passengers were travelling up the lake in a service motor launch on 9 June 1971. At one quiet stretch of water between two wooded hills the Mukti Bahini attacked the launch with machine-guns and rifles. About 40 hapless passengers had been killed.

"What about the Buddhist monasteries?" someone asked, after a minute's silence.

"Yes, some have been damaged", I said. "So have mosques. If it's deliberate would Muslims damage mosques?" Some mosques and temples had been damaged in the fighting and the Government of Pakistan had sanctioned money for the repair of all damaged religious institutions.

"You, Sir, say D.P. Barua is alive but the press reported he was murdered by the Army."

"Yes, but the press also published the contradiction issued by the World Fellowship of Buddhists President, Dhaka Branch – Ven. Visuddhananda Mahathera. Debapriya is working in the National Bank of Pakistan and at the time of my leaving East Pakistan he was alive." Though they felt I was not lying to them – and I certainly was not – they thought I was misinformed. Anti-Pakistan propaganda, sustained over a period, had left a deep impression on their minds. (In the autumn of 1998 I went to Sri Lanka to attend a Buddhist Conference and met Debapriya. He had come from Dhaka as a member of the Bangladesh delegation.)

At Kandy a former Mayor with an attractive daughter in attendance hosted a lunch in my honour. One of the leading lawyers, in the pre-luncheon discussion, voiced his conviction that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was dead – murdered in prison in West Pakistan. The question of his forthcoming trial, he said, was window dressing, a farce.

"Mrs. Ghandhi has voiced doubts too," I told him. "Doubts of Sheikh Mujib's being alive. An internationally known jurist, A.K. Brohi is going to defend him."

"I've heard of him", the lawyer conceded.

"You know what Brohi said? 'Surely Mrs. Gandhi, who knows me well, couldn't think that I'd agreed to defend a dead man'."

The visit to the Temple of the Tooth at Kandy was a memorable occasion for me as a Buddhist. A number of prominent Kandyans joined me in paying homage. The sister of one of the Deputy Ministers at Colombo had been very kind and made all the arrangements with flowers and other requisites for the *puja*. Accompanied by our Ambassador I also called on the Venerable Head Monks of the two main Chapters in Kandy and prayed together for peace.

On 27 November, along with Ambassador Altaf Sheikh, I called on the Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Her response to our quest for peace was very encouraging. At that time Sri Lanka had had its own mini-Bangladesh movement and had quelled the rebellion some months earlier. She promised to take a number of measures to resolve the Bangladesh issue politically. Had the war with India not taken place when it did, perhaps the quest for peace would have borne fruit.

The Sri Lankans believe they are the descendants of King Vijaya of Bengal. I wanted to know if King Ravan of Lanka of the Indian epic Ramayan was in fact an ancient King of Sri Lanka. The usual reply was – it was an Indian myth and devoid of substance. Some scholars think Ravan's Lanka was a place in India itself, south of the Vindhya range. In the first Bengali language primer for five year olds called "Balya Sikkha" by Ramsunder Bashak, a poem says Ram Chandra, the Prince of Ayodhya went across the Indus and fought a mighty war and killed the King of Lanka.

On 29 November 1971 we proceeded to Rangoon. Ambassador Piracha received us. In the evening Kumar U.T. Prue came to call at the Inya Lake Hotel where we were staying. He is the eldest son of the late Bohmong Kyaw Jaw San Prue Chowdhury, and had migrated to Burma about twenty years earlier. He was a staunch believer in the "Hill Tracts for the Hillmen" – a political leader of the Tracts in his days and one who believed in autonomy for the Tracts. Subsequently, when I was back in Pakistan and the war was over, I received a letter from him. He informed me that the Mukti Bahini had killed some of his brothers after the fall of Dhaka, and his aged mother had fled to Burma along with some thousands from the Bohmong Raja's territory. I reproduce excerpts from his letter:

"I enclose herewith a copy of our memorial which speaks for itself. It is not necessary to dwell at length on the tragic condition of our Hill Tracts. Not to mention ordinary hill folk, my own mother, the widow of my late father Bohmongree U.Kyaw Zaw San, is now in Arakan having had to flee from Banderban. Other relatives too are now in Burma as refugees.

We have all been branded as anti-Bangladesh. There has been no let-up of torture and killings in our place. To safeguard our race, religion and culture the hillmen of the Chittagong Hill Tracts must have regional autonomy or perish. We are ready to fight for our rights.

You are our strongest and bravest leader. We implore you to please use all your influence and to prevail on all concerned to give full support to our case for our fundamental rights as human beings.

According to the Governor-General's announcement of 3 June 1947 the Hill Tracts should have been included in Hindustan. The announcement stated categorically that no district, in which non-Muslims predominated or vice versa, would be ceded arbitrarily without a referendum. Such was the case of Sylhet district in Assam. Being predominantly a Muslim district Sylhet was ceded to form part of East Pakistan. But in the case of Chittagong Hill Tracts, inspite of its being not only a non-Muslim majority area but quite different in many ways from either the Hindus or Muslims, being overwhelmingly of Tibeto-Burman stock, the territory was nonetheless ceded to Pakistan without a referendum or its case being given a hearing by the Bengal Boundary Commission.

When the Chittagong Hill Tracts became a part of East Pakistan in August 1947, we accepted the fact with good faith and a sincere heart. When Jinnah visited Chittagong in 1948, he promised the Chiefs and their people that the tribal region would be granted regional autonomy within the framework of the Pakistan Constitution. This solemn pledge by the architect and father of Pakistan buoyed us with hope and expectation. We were told that Jinnah never broke a promise he made. To us he appeared not only as the champion of the biggest Muslim minority in India but also of the small groups of the under-privileged and the downtrodden. It was,

therefore, a tragedy of the first magnitude that his life was suddenly cut short, leaving our cherished goal unfulfilled.

After the Indian army invasion on 3 December, Mukti Bahini hooligans, led by Indian troops poured into our hills on a rampage of loot, murder and rape. As a result thousands of our people have fled into Burmese territory, including many of my relatives. The Mukti Bahini dacoits have tortured and killed four of my own brothers. Aung Shwe Prue Chowdhury (my brother-in-law and first cousin) the Minister under the Malik Government of East Pakistan is in jail and tortured daily. The Bohmong Chief is under house detention. Most of our hill students have gone underground. We, too, have put up to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman our demand for regional autonomy for Chittagong Hill Tracts. Under whatever government we may be we will not rest until our cherished goal is achieved.

We never bore any malice towards the Bengalis but have always regarded them as friends; and neighbours. But now after what they have done to us we can never be the same. The hillmen of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, whose population is microscopic compared to their teeming millions, can never feel safe until and unless regional autonomy is attained for which we are prepared to fight to the last man.

We, the people of the Chittagong Hilltracts, still consider ourselves as part of Pakistan. We need help to press forward our case. We have not the slightest hope of getting it by petitions and memorials. We will have to fight for it.".....

On 1 December 1971 Leghari and I flew to Bangkok (we had missed our flight to Kathmandu due to a misunderstanding of the flight time) because if I went to Nepal after the scheduled date, that would also interrupt my Thailand programme. So we decided to skip Nepal for the time being and continue with the Bangkok programme. On the 2nd, I was interviewed by the "Bangkok Post." On the 3rd – the day war broke out on the West Pakistan front – my interview came out on the front page of the "Bangkok Post," with my photograph. A part of it read:

"Every country has its own problems and it is the norm of international conduct that every country should be allowed to solve its own problems in its own way without any external interference. India has no business to interfere in the affairs of Pakistan. It is for the people of East Pakistan, West Pakistan, and the whole of Pakistan to decide what changes they require to create a peaceful administration. India is trying to turn East Pakistan into an independent satellite state."

On 3 December, Ambassador Rub and I called on Princess Poopisamal Diskul, President, World Fellowship of Buddhists, and on the 6th on Prince Dhani Nivat. On 8 December, we called on the then head of government, Field Marshal Kittikachorn, and later in the morning on His Majesty, Rama IV King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

CHAPTER XXXXI

First-Ever Elected Cabinet

It was about noon on 1 December 1971. I was talking to a Thai friend in the lounge of my hotel in Bangkok when I was summoned to the telephone. Khurram Khan Panni was on the line. He was Pakistan's Ambassador to the Philippines but had defected and was now Bangladesh's Ambassador visiting Thailand. Khurram comes from the well-known landlord family of Karatia in Tangail. He had been a member of the East Pakistan provincial assembly with me in 1962, and having joined the government party had become the Chief Parliamentary Secretary. As President Ayub Khan had banned political parties, we had all been elected as independents to that assembly. After the elections, however, political parties were allowed to function and most of the members joined Ayub Khan's newly resuscitated Convention Muslim League. The opposition comprised mainly Awami League members, and the Council Muslim League. Ghulam Farooq, the then Governor of East Pakistan, A.T.M. Mustafa, then Law Minister, and K.K. Panni had in turn each asked me to join the Government party and to become a Parliamentary Secretary. I had rejected the offer with thanks and was the only elected member that did not join any political party.

A week or two after the elections based on limited franchise, the voters being "basic democrats," one of the new MPAs from Chittagong, Jalil, owner of Begum Rice Mills, had thrown a dinner party in honour of the MNAs and MPAs from Chittagong division. At the meeting Fazlul Quader Chowdhury and others decided not to cooperate with President Ayub Khan unless the latter conceded the five minimum demands of East Pakistan that had been well publicized already. However, when we reached Dhaka most of these leaders threw the demands overboard. They went to call on President Ayub on the quiet and some of them offered their services to him. Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, like Wahiduzzaman, was inducted into President Ayub's cabinet shortly after.

As mentioned earlier, I had been selected for a cabinet post, that of a provincial minister, and my name was sent up to the central government for approval. Wahiduzzaman, elected from a constituency in Faridpur, was greatly indebted to Bhabani Shankar Biswas, a Hindu member of the provincial assembly. Each national assembly constituency comprised two provincial constituencies and Wahiduzzaman's included Biswas's. Biswas had helped to secure the Hindu votes for Wahiduzzaman in his election to the national assembly. Wahiduzzaman, who had been taken into the Federal Cabinet, prevailed upon President Ayub Khan to substitute my name with that of Biswas for ministership in the provincial government. By convention, or for expediency, a member of the minority community was always included in the East Pakistan provincial cabinet.

To get back to the present, Khurram (K.K. as he was fondly called) spoke of the good old days, and then said he had been invited to lunch at a certain hotel by the Bengalis in Bangkok. They were going to swear allegiance to Bangladesh after lunch. "Raja, join us at lunch," he exhorted me, "and defect to Bangladesh." He offered some attractive inducements and warned me of the possibility of unpleasant consequences if I did not comply. I said, "Don't you think these suggestions to a representative of Pakistan are improper?" We spoke back and forth for a while on the telephone. I told him again I was not going to defect. He told me where he was staying in case I should change my mind.

I thought about my successful efforts at obtaining the special status for the Tracts under direct central administration in the forthcoming Pakistan constitution, and the extracted promise of its fulfilment was a dream of many generations come true. It meant the Tracts would be totally outside the purview of the exploitative provincial government in Dhaka. Now that Pakistan seemed on the verge of being torn asunder, all that was nullified. I nursed no illusions about Sheikh Mujib and his Awami League. I was in no doubt about their attitude and feelings on the question of autonomy and constitutional safeguards for the Hill Tracts. I wondered, if I went back, whether their attitude toward the Tracts would change. I was convinced that at best he might make a show of some unimportant and flimsy concessions. Of course, on the personal level, very likely he would take me into his cabinet or at the least offer me an ambassadorial posting abroad. In fact, when I was in Dhaka at the beginning of March I had been told on good authority that I was going to be taken into Mujib's cabinet, even though I had not joined the Awami League.

My mind went back to the land of my birth, the Hill Tracts, and to my people, my friends and relatives and my family. I saw again the house on the island and my favourite spot, the terrace at the back of the house, and the Chakma hut at the end of the rose garden where I would sit and gaze at the lake and let the serenity of the surroundings seep in. I thought of little Troya, my six-year-old daughter, proudly demonstrating before me the new dance steps she had learnt from her dance master, Dilawar Hussain. She gave me a long shopping list and told me on 9 November when I left she would miss me and asked me to come back quickly. And there was Waiki riding on my shoulders when I returned from holding court, and talking animatedly the while. He was born in 1963 while I was in Honolulu on my way back from attending the World Food Congress at Washington D.C. My sister Rakhi had called him Waikiki, after the beach in Honolulu, and the nickname had stuck. I remembered my other children, whom I now missed.

I reflected on my wife, Arati, who had shared my life through all its ups and downs for 18 years, and my children, and cousin Kalashona whom I had married in 1964, and our daughter Piya and many others. I saw again the long suffering face of my mother. For some time nostalgia overpowered me and familiar faces and scenes, now shadowy, now vivid, came into sharp focus, lingered a while, then faded. Glimpses of my childhood and the serenity of the Tracts stabbed me like a whiff of

familiar perfume. Could I serve the Hill Tracts' cause for autonomy as a henchman of Mujib's? In the circumstances could I do anything useful from within Bangladesh?

I pondered the inscrutable ways of fate and wondered if I would ever see my loved ones and my native land again. My future was uncertain in Pakistan where I would be all alone, cut off from my family, my people and my beloved Hill Tracts. One can but let destiny unfold. My training, my past, and above all my father's influence and that of my religion made everything within me revolt at the idea of defection. I was a Pakistani citizen owing my allegiance to Pakistan. I was a Special Envoy, an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of a man and a country that was discredited, vanquished, down in the dust. I could not let the side down. It was not cricket.

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SPEECH OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER OF PAKISTAN ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO AT HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 1971 AT 12:10 P.M.

We have met here today at a grave moment in the history of my country, and I would request the Council kindly to forbear with me and to hear the truth, the bitter truth. I know the United Nations. I know the Security Council. I have participated here in the past. The time has come when, as far as Pakistan is concerned, we shall have to speak the truth, whether members of the Council like it or not. We were hoping that the Security Council, mindful of its responsibilities for the maintenance of world peace and justice, would have acted according to principle and brought an end to naked, brutal aggression against my people. For this reason I left my country. I was needed by the people of Pakistan, and when I was leaving Pakistan I was in a divided mind whether to go to the Security Council to represent the cause of my country, to represent the cause of a people that had been subjected to aggression, or to remain with my people, by their side, while they were being subjected to attack and violence. However, I felt that it was imperative for me to come here and to seek justice from the Security Council. But I must say, whether the members like it or not, that the Security Council has denied my country that justice. From the moment I arrived we have been caught by dilatory tactics.

It will be recalled that when the Indian Foreign Minister spoke and I spoke after him I said that filibustering was taking place. That was my immediate observation. The Security Council, I am afraid, has excelled in the art of filibustering, not only on substance but also on procedural matters. With some cynicism I watched yesterday a full hour of the Security Council's time wasted on whether the members

of the Council would be ready to meet at 9:30 a.m. or bed and breakfast required that they should meet at 11:00 a.m.

The representative of Somalia referred to the population of East Pakistan as 56 million, but later on he corrected himself to say that the population of Bengal -- of Muslim Bengal -- was 76 million. If he had waited for a few more days he need not have corrected himself because millions are dying, and it would have come to 56 million if the Council had kept on filibustering and discussing whether it should meet today or tomorrow or the day after tomorrow -- whether the lines of communication between New York and Moscow and Peking and other capitals would permit the members to obtain new instructions. Thus we could have gone on and on. That is why I requested you, Mr. President, to convene a meeting of the Security Council immediately, and I am thankful to you for having convened this meeting, because precious time is being lost. My countrymen, my people, are dying. So I think I can facilitate your efforts if I speak now. Perhaps this will be my last speech in the Security Council. So please bear with me, because I have some home truths to tell the Security Council. The world must know. My people must know. I have not come here to accept abject surrender. If the Security Council wants me to be a party to the legalization of abject surrender, then I say that under no circumstances shall I be. Yesterday my 11-year old son telephoned me from Karachi and said to me, "Do not come back with a document of surrender. We do not want to see you back in Pakistan if you come like that." I will not take back a document of surrender from the Security Council. I will not be a party to the legalization of aggression.

The Security Council has failed miserably, shamefully. "The Charter of the United Nations", "the San Francisco Conference", "International Peace and Justice" -- these are the words we heard in our youth, and we were inspired by the concept of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and justice and security. President Woodrow Wilson said that he fought the First World War to end wars for all time. The League of Nations came into being, and then the United Nations after it. What has the United Nations done? I know of the farce and the fraud of the United Nations. They come here and say, "Excellence, Excellence, comment allez-vous?" and all that. "A very good speech -- you have spoken very well, tres bien." We have heard all these things. The United Nations has turned into a fashion house. It is Nina Ricci. It is Christian Dior, not the United Nations for the preservation of world peace. Do you know why Christian Dior and the United Nations are Nina Ricci? Because they try to hide ugly realities. As ugly figures go to Nina Ricci to conceal their figures, they have made the United Nations into a fashion house, to hide the ugly realities. They are trying to hide the ugly realities, but the ugly realities cannot be hidden. You do not need a Secretary-General. You need a chief executioner.

Let us face the stark truth. I have got no stakes left for the moment. That is why I am speaking the truth from my heart. For four days we have been deliberating here. For four days the Security Council has procrastinated. Why? Because the object was for Dacca to fall. That was the object. It was quite clear to me from the beginning. All right, so what if Dacca falls? Cities and countries have fallen before.

They have come under foreign occupation. China was under foreign occupation for 14 years. Other countries have been under foreign occupation. France was under foreign occupation. Western Europe was under foreign occupation. So what if Dacca falls? So what if the whole of East Pakistan falls? So what if the whole of West Pakistan falls? So what if we are obliterated? We will build a new Pakistan. We will build a better Pakistan, we will build a greater Pakistan.

The Security Council has acted shortsightedly by acquiescing in these dilatory tactics. You know you have come to a point when we shall say, "Do what you like". Before the Council came to this point we could have made a commitment. We could have said, "All right, we are prepared to do some things". Now why should we? You want to silence us by guns, silence our voices by arms. Why should we say that we shall agree to anything? Now you decide what you like. Your decision will not be binding on us. You can decide what you like. If you had left us a margin of hope, we might have been a party to some settlement.

But the Indians are so shortsighted. Mr. President, you referred to the "distinguished" Foreign Minister of India. What is distinguished about him? If he can be the Foreign Minister of India I could have been the Prime Minister of United India. But I would much rather be a janitor in a free country, and I am a member of a free country, even if it is obliterated. How is he distinguished, because his hands are full of blood, because his heart is full of venom? I told him the other day. But you know they did not have vision, partition took place because they did not have vision. Now also they are lacking vision. They talk about their ancient civilization and the mystique of India and all that. But they do not have vision at all. If I had been in his place, I should have acted differently. I extended a hand of friendship to him the other day. He should have seen what I meant. I am not talking as a puppet. I am talking as the authentic leader of the people of West Pakistan, who elected me at the polls in a more impressive victory than the victory that Mujibur Rahman received in East Pakistan, and he should have taken cognizance of that. But he did not take cognizance of it. We could have opened a new page, a new chapter in our relations.

As I said, if the French and the Germans can come to terms, why cannot India and Pakistan come to terms. If the Turks and the Greeks can still talk sensibly as civilized people over Cyprus, why could not India and Pakistan come to terms? If the Soviet Union and the United States can open a new page in their history, if China and the United States can open a new page in their history, why could we not come to terms? We could have come to terms. But as it was said about the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the military victory of Israel made it more difficult for Israel and the Arabs to come to terms. If you want to subjugate Pakistan militarily, you will find it more difficult to come to terms. I say that the choice for you is either to live in the same subcontinent cooperating for peace and progress, or to live as implacable enemies.

The permanent representative of the Soviet Union does not like my reference to the Roman Empire. I do not know what objection he has to it, unless he sees some similarity between his empire and the Roman Empire. I do not really see why he had

any objection to that. But I shall again refer to the Roman Empire, and I hope that the permanent representative of the Soviet Union will have no objection to it, because we want to have good relations with the Soviet Union and we want to open a new chapter with the Soviet Union because we are neighbours. I go back to the Roman Empire and I say that Cato said to the Romans, "Carthage must be destroyed". If India thinks that it is going to subjugate Pakistan, Eastern Pakistan as well as Western Pakistan – because we are one people, we are one State -- then we shall say, "Carthage must be destroyed". We shall tell our children and they will tell their children that Carthage must be destroyed.

So please, Mr. President and members of the Security Council, realize the implications. The Pakistan nation is a brave nation. One of the greatest British generals said that the best infantry fighters in the world are the Pakistanis. We will fight. We will fight for a thousand years, if it comes to that. So do not go by momentary military victories. Stalingrad was overwhelmed. Leningrad was besieged for a thousand days. People who want to be free and who want to maintain their personality will fight and will continue to fight for principles.

We were told about the realities, to accept the realities. What are realities? Realities keep changing, Mr. Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union. The reality was that the Nazi forces were outside the gates of Moscow. But you fought valiantly, you fought bravely and the world saluted the Soviet Union for having resisted the realities. The reality was that China was under the occupation of Japan, that Manchuria was taken – half of China. That was the reality since the Opium War, China has seen reality. The reality for France was that it was under occupation. But there were great men like President de Gaulle who left France and they fought across the seas. Ethiopia was under fascist domination. But the Ethiopians fought. The Emperor of Ethiopia left his country and sought asylum in Britain. Ethiopia is free today. The realities are not a temporary phenomenon. The realities are studded in principles, and the principle is that Pakistan is an independent sovereign State, which came into being of its own free will and accord. That is the basic reality which has existed for 24 years and which would not have been dismembered like this if it had not been attacked by another country. This is not an internal movement. We have been subjected to attack by a powerful military neighbour. Who says that this is the reality of free will? It is not the reality of free will. If it was the reality of a free will, India would not have attacked Pakistan; India would not have invaded my country to impose its will for a handful of secessionists. If India talks about the will of the people of East Pakistan and that it had to attack Pakistan in order to impose the will of the people of East Pakistan, then what has it done about Kashmir?

East Pakistan is an integral part of Pakistan. Kashmir was a disputed territory. Why does India then not ask them to exercise their will.

But yesterday I saw how the Security Council was pandering to India. Even the great powers are pandering to India, saying "Do not misunderstand", "Would you please let us know", "Would you please answer the following questions", "I am not

insisting on those questions, but if you do not mind". India is intoxicated today with its military successes. In 1967 there was a representative on the India delegation who is now their permanent representative. This was not today; in 1967 I told him that we wanted to have good relations. I am not speaking from a position of weakness. I told him in 1967 that we wanted good relations between the two countries -- but based on principles, based on justice, based on equity, not based on exploitation and domination. Because if you do it on the basis of exploitation and domination, it cannot be a lasting solution. What we want is a lasting, a permanent solution. I did not say this today; I said that in 1967 to their permanent representative, who was then the High Commissioner of India to Pakistan. I told to the Foreign Minister of India when we were negotiating on Kashmir: "Let us settle this problem on the basis of equity and justice, so that we can live as good neighbours."

Therefore, when I say today that we could still have lived as good neighbours, we could still have lived as friends. Do not wipe out that possibility by military conquest and military power.

This has been the worst form of aggression, of naked aggression. Even Poland was not invaded by Germany in this fashion. Even in that case there were some pretences, some excuses that were made. Here the excuse was "We have refugees, so we must invade another country". We said, "We are prepared to take those refugees back". If we had said, "We are not prepared to take them back", then you could have said, "Well, you will be sunk". India's population rises by 13 million a year. The number of refugees was alleged to be 9 million, 10 million; according to our estimate, there were 5 million. But that is not important, figures are not important. The point is that we were prepared to take them back. If India's population can expand by 13 million a year, then with all the aid and assistance that India was getting for the refugees, it could have held on for a short period until the civilian government came into Pakistan to negotiate the return of the refugees. I told the United States Ambassador in Pakistan that once a civilian government came into Pakistan, I was prepared to go to the refugee camps myself to talk to them. But they pre-empted it all, because the refugee problem was used as a pretext to dismember my country. But my country will not be dismembered so easily. The refugee problem was used as a pretext, an ugly, crude pretext, a shameful pretext to invade my country, to invade East Pakistan.

The great Powers will forgive me. I have addressed them in this moment of anguish, and they should understand. The great Powers, or the Super Powers -- the Super-duper-Powers, the razzling-dazzling Powers -- the Super Powers have imposed their super will for the moment. But I am thankful to the people and the Government of the United States, among the Super Powers, for the position it has taken. The people of the United States to some extent have been misled by massive Indian propaganda. While we had no paraphernalia of administration and government in Pakistan, there was a political vacuum. The Indians took advantage of that political vacuum and they spread out fast to give their point of view. As a result, American public opinion, and public opinion in Great Britain and France and other countries,

was influenced. Unfortunately, nothing was said of the massacres that took place between 1 March and 25 March. These were mistakes. I said that mistakes were made, and the permanent representative of the Soviet Union said that I admitted mistakes had been made. Well, that is not a sign of weakness, is it? Do we not all make mistakes? Are India and the Soviet Union the only two countries that have never made mistakes? I have made mistakes personally. I said yesterday that mistakes had been made. I admitted there had been mistakes. But mistakes do not mean that my country must be destroyed, that my country must be dismembered. That is not the consequence of mistakes of government. Which Government does not make mistakes? Do mistakes mean that if some Government has made a mistake, the country itself must be dismembered, obliterated? Is that going to be the conclusion of the Security Council, by legalizing Indian aggression on the soil of Pakistan?

So you will see now; this is not the end of the road; this is the beginning of the road; this is not the end of the chapter; a new chapter has begun, a new page has been written in international relations. This is Gunboat diplomacy. This is the worst form of Gunboat diplomacy. It makes the Hitlerite aggression pale into insignificance, because Hitlerite aggression was not accepted by the world. If the world is going to endorse this aggression, it will mean a new and most unfortunate chapter in international relations. There is a new chapter that has begun in India and Pakistan, but please do not begin a new chapter in international relations. Because now, for us, it is a hand-to-hand, day-to-day, minute-to-minute fight. But do not do that to the rest of the world. Please do not permit this kind of naked, shameful, barbaric aggression to hold sway. In the old days great warriors swept over the world – Genghis Khan, Subutai Khan, Alexander, Caesar, coming down to the great Napoleon. But this is worse, this is much worse. This is much worse than all that was done by the great conquerors of the world in the past. If the United Nations becomes a party to this kind of conquest, it will be much worse than all that has been done in the past. You will be turning the medium-sized and the small countries into the harlots of the world. You cannot to that. It is against civilized concepts, it is against all the rules of civilization and of international morality and justice.

The United States Government was criticized for supporting the position of Pakistan. What crime has the United States Government committed? The United States Government has taken the position that the whole world has taken on the India-Pakistan conflict. That position was supported by 105 countries -- it was 104 officially, but it was really 105 because some country did not know how to press the right button. But 105 countries supported it. This is the voice of the world. It is an international referendum. It is an international election. You talked about the election of 1970. Well, I am proud of the election of 1970 because my Party emerged as the strongest party in West Pakistan. I am not against the election of 1970. But this was an international election, this was an international referendum, and India flouted that international election. If it flouts an international election, why is it so sensitive to a national election? India flouted an international referendum; that is why it refuses to hold a referendum in Kashmir. This was an international referendum.

The permanent representative of the Soviet Union talked about realities. Mr. Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union, look at this reality. I know that you are a leader of a great country; you are permanent representative of the Soviet Union. You behave like one. The way you throw out your chest, the way you thump the table, you do not talk like Comrade Malik; you talk like Tsar Malik. I am glad you are smiling, because I am not; my heart is bleeding. We want to be friends, but this is not the way to be friends when my country is decimated, destroyed, wiped out.

Any way, then, should China and the United States be criticized when the whole world is for Pakistan? You know that we have won a great political victory. We might have suffered a military defeat, but a political victory is more important that a military defeat because political victory is permanent, while military defeat is temporary. The United States Government has acted according to its great traditions by supporting Pakistan, and I will go before the people of the United States before I return home and tell them the truth. The United States has stood by the traditions of Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, right down to Roosevelt and Wilson, by supporting Pakistan as an independent State, its national integrity and its national unity. What wrong and crime has the United States committed? Why is the Indian delegation so annoyed with the United States? The Indian delegation is annoyed with it -- can you imagine that? If it had not been for the massive food assistance that the United States gave to India, India would have had starvation; its millions would have died. What hope will India give to the people of East Pakistan? What picture of hope is it going to give when its own people in Western Bengal sleep in the streets, where there is terrible poverty, where there is terrible injustice and exploitation, when the parliamentary rule in West Bengal has been superseded by presidential rule? With tutelage under Indian occupation of East Pakistan, of Muslim Bengal, are they going to do better for them than they have done for West Bengal? The people of West Bengal sleep in the streets of Calcutta. The people of West Bengal are the poorest. They go hat in hand to the United States for 6 million tons of food. If they are going to impose presidential rule in West Bengal, in their Bengal, how can they do any better in my Bengal? They will not. And time will show that they will not.

So the United States has taken a correct and moral position. Thomas Jefferson once said: "I have sworn eternal hostility against any form of tyranny practiced over the mind of man." This is a vast form of tyranny practiced over the mind of man and over the body of man. So the United States has gone by its tradition. And if some misguided Senators were here, some young, misguided Senators who have been overtaken by Indian propaganda -- and if the permanent representative of the United States were not from Texas -- I would have told those young Senators to fall into whatever lake it was that I am setting up the headquarters for a republic of Texas and making the former President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson, the chief of that Republic, to spread Bangladesh everywhere. Why can Texas not be free? Let there be a Republic of Texas. I did not buy Bengal as Alaska was bought by the United States. We did not pay money to get our territory. We did not pay dollars to acquire territory. The people of the United States should appreciate the position taken by their Government.

Bengal was a part of Pakistan of its free will, not through money. We did not buy it as Alaska was purchased. Why do the people of the United States not see that?

And we are beholden and thankful to the great people's Republic of China. We shall always remain thankful for the position it has taken. It has taken a position based on principles of justice. And I thank the third world for having supported a just cause, a right cause.

And now in the Security Council we have been frustrated by a veto. Let us build a monument to the veto, a big monument to the veto. The veto comes as a great monument to prevent death from taking place, to prevent lives from being lost. This is power politics coming out of the worst computer. So let us build a monument to the veto. Let us build a monument to the impotence and incapacity of the Security Council and the General Assembly. As you sow, so shall you reap. Remember that biblical saying. Today it is Pakistan. We are the guinea pigs; we are your guinea pigs. But there will be other guinea pigs and you will see what happens. You will see how the chain of events unfolds itself. You want us to lick the dust. We are not going to lick the dust.

Britain and France have abstained in order to play a role. I said the other day, with all due respect to those two great powers, that they have really exhausted their position in playing a role, because now the only role they can play is to accept a shameless *fait accompli*. Britain and France abstained, and that abstention has cost us dearly. Gallic logic and Anglo-Saxon experience, whatever it is, have cost us dearly. If Britain and France had put their powerful weight behind the international community rather than sitting on the fence -- there is no such animal as a neutral animal. You take positions. In that respect we admire the Soviet Union; it took a position, a wrong position, but it took a position. You have to take a position on these matters. You have to either be on the side of justice or on the side of injustice; you have to be either on the side of the aggressor or of the aggressed. There is no such thing as neutrality. There is no third road. It is a black and white situation in these matters; there is no grey involved. You are either for right or you are for wrong; you are either for justice or for injustice; you are either for aggression or for the aggressed. There is no third role to perform, and if the United Kingdom and France had earlier on put their full weight behind this, I think that we would not have reached this position. But Great Britain and France want to come back into the subcontinent, as Clive and Dupleix, in a different role, the role of peacemaker. They want a foot here and they want a foot there. I know that British interests in East Pakistan required this kind of opportunistic role because in East Pakistan they have their tea estates. They want the jute -- which in America is called burlap -- of East Pakistan. So that is why they sat on the fence. And I am most sorrowful for France because with France we had developed very good relations, extremely good relations. But they took this position. And now, today, neither Britain nor France can play a role because their resolution has been overtaken by events. There is a lot of goodwill for France in Pakistan, and they will not get the same goodwill in East Pakistan because in East Pakistan already the clock is now moving in the other direction.

Every day that the Indian army of occupation stays there it will be a grim reminder for Muslim Bengal that they are under Hindu occupation, and you will see the result of it. You will see how it will turn out.

Let them stay -- why not? Let them stay, let them swagger around. If they want to take East Pakistan, let them stay as an army of occupation. They are an army of occupation; how can they be called liberators? They are not liberators. They will stay, and they will see how the clock is going to move in a different direction.

Finally, I am not a rat. I have never ratted in my life. I have faced assassination attempts, I have faced imprisonments, I have always been a man of crisis. Today, I am not ratting, but I am leaving your Security Council. I find it disgraceful to my person and to my country to remain here a moment longer than is necessary. I am not boycotting. Impose any decision, have a treaty worse than the Treaty of Versailles, legalize aggression, legalize occupation, legalize everything that has been illegal up to 15 December 1971. I will not be a party to it. We will fight, we will go back and fight. My country beckons to me. Why should I waste my time here in the Security Council? I will not be a party to the ignominious surrender of part of my country. You can take your Security Council. Here you are. I am going.

The above speech was acclaimed worldwide as "one of the best ever" at the United Nations. The following day, 16 December 1971, Lt. Gen. Niazi surrendered to the invading Indian army General Aurora in Dhaka. The cruelty and violence committed by the Army as well as the Mukti Bahini brought about unmitigated disaster and the reduction of the proud and powerful nation of Pakistan to little Bangladesh in southeastern Asia as one residual stump, and straddling the northwest of the subcontinent on the fringes of the middle east and Central Asia, the bulk of Pakistan like a giant torn asunder that looked like a wounded butterfly. By the close of the 20th century Bangladesh had a per capita income around one hundred and thirtyone dollars. And in 2002 the majority of the population had come to earn less than a dollar per diem and was below the poverty line, not to speak of the growing unemployment figures.

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President General Yahya Khan's C.G.S. in the Army was Lt. General Gul Hassan, reputed to be a thoroghly professional soldier. Air Marshal Rahim Khan was the head of the Air Force. Dhaka fell on 16 December 1971. On 20 December these two led the disaffected young officers and prompted President Yahya Khan to resign and hand over power as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the majority party in the remaining "new Pakistan".

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The non-stop Pan Am Jumbo jet flight from Bangkok landed in Tehran at 7.25 a.m. It was 20 December 1971 and the Iranian capital was having its first

snowfall of the season. The same evening at the house of one of our diplomats we listened to President Bhutto's first broadcast to the nation, on being handed over power by General Yahya Khan earlier on the same day.

"I have been summoned by the nation at this critical hour, when we are at the edge of the precipice, to lead the nation," said the President. "I have not been capriciously thrust upon them. I am speaking to you today as the authentic voice of the people of Pakistan, not by virtue of the office that I hold, but by virtue of the verdict that you gave in the national elections.

My opponents have said that I have been power hungry. I am not power hungry. If I was power hungry, I would have compromised at Tashkent. I have been five and a half years in a struggle for democracy and it has not been an ordinary struggle. I have been sent to jail. I still have on my back the marks of *lathi* charges. I was tear-gassed. Five assassination attempts were made on my life. I stood by the people. We have to rebuild a situation in which the common man, the poor man in the street, can tell me to go to hell, 'I do not believe you' and 'I do not like you!' We have to make our government accountable.

Now my heart and the hearts of my friends are with our brethren in East Pakistan and our people in East Pakistan. East Pakistan is an inseparable and indissoluble part of Pakistan. The heroic people of East Pakistan had a great role to play in the creation of Pakistan. Without their contribution, there would have been no Pakistan. They are the majority of our land and I am fully convinced that they want to remain with us. I appeal to them not to forget us but forgive us if they are angry with us.

Coming to the question of our relations between East and West Pakistan, I will say, mistakes have been made. We have made those mistakes. Where and when they were made, I cannot go into that matter at this moment. But if mistakes have been made, that does not mean that the country should be dismembered, that the country should be destroyed by physical force and physical power. This is unprecedented in the annals of the world. To rectify and make amends for our mistakes, I seek an opportunity to meet the leaders of Bengal and the people of Bengal to arrive at a settlement between East and West Pakistan without foreign interference and certainly without foreign occupation. We must be given that opportunity so that we may arrive at a settlement between two brothers who have always lived together for the last twenty-four years and under certain conditions will continue to live together for all times."

"One hundred and four countries of the world supported Pakistan's position," said Bhutto referring to the General Assembly vote. He did not directly refer to the Security Council where his recent speech was hailed as one of the 'best ever' at the United Nations. He continued, "My dear countrymen, do not think that we have lost. We have won, because a political victory is much greater than a military victory. Military victories come and go..... India has used the election of East Pakistan as

a pretext. She talked about the refugee problem and as a result of it she invaded my country. We have never said that we do not want to take back refugees. We have said that whatever the number we want our own citizens back in our country. But India has brought them on their guns, on their bayonets and on their tanks; and let me tell you, my brethren of East Pakistan, India will bring many more and you will see the developments with the passage of each day. India did not want to talk to a military regime. India did not want a military solution of the problem. What India has imposed today on East Pakistan, is it a political solution? India said that there can only be a political solutior but she has a military conclusion. If we have failed to impose a military solution internally, India will equally fail to impose a military solution externally. India's days in East Pakistan are doomed to fail, India simply cannot succeed. India knows the spirit of the people of Pakistan..... I am afraid the nation has been fed on lies. Deception has been the order of the day. We have been misled."

In his speech the President announced the retirement of certain generals of the Army, "on the wishes of the people, on the wishes of the armed forces of Pakistan." He also announced withdrawal of the ban imposed by the Yahya regime on the National Awami Party. Regarding the by-elections held in East Pakistan when many of the Awami League MNAs, elected in 1970, had fled to India after the Army action, President Bhutto said, "The by-elections that have been held in East Pakistan were impracticable and were an insult to the people. I liquidate the results of the by-elections held in East Pakistan. I would have talked to the two elected leaders of East Pakistan, Nurul Amin as well as the Chakma Chief, who is out of the country. I want him to come back immediately to Pakistan so that we can hold consultations. These are the two elected leaders of East Pakistan returned on a free vote in the December, 1970, elections....."

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The Afghan Airlines Ariana flight to Kabul on the 21st morning was uneventful save that in its first attempt it swooped low, missed the runway and almost as an afterthought zoomed up again, barely skimming the mountaintops. It circled Kabul airport leisurely a few more times, then abruptly and bumpily landed on its second attempt. Sardar Shahnawaz Khan, our Ambassador to Iran was a grandson of the former King of Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman, who ruled from 1880-1901. His wife, a cousin of his, was on the same flight from Iran to Kabul. As we disembarked, with resolution in her voice she remarked, "I'll never fly Ariana again." Her reaction reminded me of a hazardous experience in 1969. I had gone to the Buddha's birthplace, Lumbini in Nepal, plodding along on an elephant called Rajkoli from Bhairawa on a dusty dirt road that, however, has since changed.

On that trip I had taken a flight from Kathmandu to Pokhara (pronounced Pokhra). The plane was an ancient and austerely furnished Dakota. When the "no smoking" sign went off I lit up a cigarette. I had hardly taken a few puffs when a young mother with a suckling babe on her lap pointed to me and started upbraiding

me in rapidfire Nepali. I had not the foggiest notion as to why I was the object of her ire and gazed at her, helplessly bemused. The Air Stewardess casually saunterd over to me at a leisurely pace and told me that the much agitated lady was worried that I might set the plane on fire. So, although strictly speaking I could smoke would I oblige and desist? I complied with alacrity. After a while the plane tried to land but could not because there were too many cows grazing on the meadow that was the airport. I looked out of the window to locate the runway but there wasn't any. Somebody clanged a bell and chased the cows away. The plane finally landed on the field. There was no landing strip, nor any airport building. The passengers waited in the shade of a large tree at the edge of the field. I am happy to report that the situation has improved since those days.

Our Ambassador to Afghanistan received us and we drove to his house for a sumptuous lunch. The escort sent by the Government of Pakistan, Air Vice-Marshal Qadir joined Leghari and me and at two in the afternoon we left for Pakistan by car. After zigzagging across the historic Khyber Pass through which many ancient warriors had passed from Alexander to Babar, we got into Peshawar at 8 o'clock in the evening, and after dinner at the Air Force Mess pushed on to Rawalpindi. It was past midnight when I entered my room at the Intercontinental Hotel.

When I was ushered in, a trim President Bhutto in a pewter grey suit was sitting behind a small desk in the President's Guest House. It was 11:30 on the morning of 23 December. He rose and greeted me warmly. We talked for a while on the latest situation in Pakistan and East Pakistan, and briefly of my tour. He expressed his appreciation, told me that Pakistan needed me and asked me to join his cabinet and serve the nation. Later that night, actually at 3 in the morning on the 24th, President Bhutto swore in the new cabinet of twelve Ministers of which I was a member. Nurul Amin was taken in as Vice-President. He had also been the Prime Minister of a provisional government of Pakistan at the end of 1971 when Bhutto was made Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Nurul Amin died in Pakistan on 2 October 1974, at the age of 85. I was given the portfolio of Minorities Affairs in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's cabinet of 12 Ministers. Since the inception of Pakistan this was the first-ever elected cabinet and government.

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PART II

A Decade In "New Pakistan"

CHAPTER I

January-September 1972

The site of the new capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad, was selected in June 1959 by the then Chairman of the Capital Selection Committee, General A.M. Yahya Khan. On the Potohar plateau about 2000 feet above sea level and fringed by majestic mountains it was not far from the old garrison town and interim capital, Rawalpindi. On 24 May 1960 Doxiades Associates of Athens presented the first plan of the proposed city to President Ayub Khan and his cabinet. The first residents began shifting from 6 October 1963. Now in 1972 the population of Islamabad was 76,641. Two witty observations about Islamabad are attributed to foreign diplomats. One is that the city is 15 miles from Pakistan, and the second is that it is half the size of the Arlington Cemetery and twice as dead. On 7 January 1972, I shifted from the Hotel Intercontinental in Rawalpindi to a compact two storeyed house that I had selected on Embassy Road in Islamabad.

In East Pakistan Rangamati and Cox's Bazar had been the two greatest tourist attractions, and after the formation of the Kaptai Lake in 1960 Rangamati had become an even greater attraction especially for foreign tourists. Consequently I had been meeting domestic and international tourists at an accelerating pace since 1960. I had also been on the Pakistan Tourist Advisory Committee. Pakistan as a whole had a great deal to offer to tourists, both domestic and international, but the subject had been continuously neglected. So, on 11 January 1972, I went to call on the President and told him my views on the possibilities of tourism and suggested, if he had confidence in me, the creation of a separate Ministry altogether. President Bhutto with his quick grasp, his imagination and flair, readily agreed. On the 20th a separate Division was created and linked with my portfolio of Minorities Affairs.

On 2 February, in the evening, President's Special Assistant and close Adviser Rafi Raza – also an Oxford graduate and a barrister like Bhutto came to visit me at my house on Embassy Road. So did Capt. Sajjad Akbar, small, tough and wiry, from the S.S.G. (Special Services Group), who had served in the Hill Tracts during the civil war. From the moment of first eye contact these two took an instant dislike to each other. In no time the two entered into a heated argument, so much so that Sajjad, combative by temperament, said he wanted to beat up Rafi Raza but refrained only because he was my guest. It was not very pleasant for me as host and arbitrator either but gradually they simmered down without any actual physical combat. While Rafi was not quite the epitome of the western educated, who usually fall into two categories, the suave and understated or the slightly brash haw haw type. Rafi fitted into neither group but was less mellow in those days.

In the first week of March, Ture Andersson, a Swedish friend of mine from Kaptai days, brought my first letters from home. He had gone to Bangladesh to help in its reconstruction after the war. In April, while I was on a tour to Karachi, Amirali Fancy, Chairman of the Tourism Development Corporation and a leader of the Ismailis in Pakistan told me Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan was passing through. He wanted me to meet the Prince as he was also the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and might be able to help my family in the Tracts, or at least be made aware of their predicament. The Prince had a very busy schedule but when we discussed my family and the Hill Tracts, on two attempts of mine to leave, he requested me to stay on and continue with the discussion. I met him and his fiancée subsequently at our U.N. Permanent Representative Ambassador Akhund and his Belgian wife Laila's place in New York, and on a number of occasions before and after they got married. He struck me as a man of great ability and compassion.

On an average I visited Karachi once a month. Apart from its being the capital of Sindh and the home of many minority groups, it was then also the headquarters of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation. "Pakistan Tours Ltd" was one of its subsidiaries, but PTDC had very few assets, so I initiated a move to acquire on long lease the four hotels from the Evacuee Property Trust Board for the PTDC. These were Flashman's at Rawalpindi, Faletti's at Lahore, Cecil's at Murree and Dean's at Peshawar.

On 3 March 1972 Bhutto removed Gul Hasan and Rahim Khan from office and had them driven under an armed escort consisting of senior PPP political leaders like Mustafa Khar, Ghulam Mustafa Jataoi and others to a safehouse in Lahore. Later Bhutto sent them off as Ambassadors, one to Austria and the other to Spain. Subsequently I met Rahim Khan in Spain where he served with style and distinction. It has to be said that Gul Hassan was every inch a soldier and until his end lived in a room at the Army Club in Rawalpindi, which was his bachelor home. He had married in Vienna, in the autumn of his life, but that had not worked out, and after returning to Pakistan he lived alone, as before. There never was a whisper about his probity. Neither he nor Rahim Khan, who led a retired life after his ambassadorial assignment was over, was ever anything but honest. And so was Yahya Khan, who was blameless in financial matters. Yahya Khan took nothing beyond his entitlement, no extra plots of land, nor did he get his son into any cushy job or provide undue favours or state patronage to his only son and daughter.

On 9 March, I left by PIA for Karachi at 10:15 a.m. Minister of State, General Akbar Khan was also on this flight. General Akbar Khan was trained at Sandhurst and was awarded the DSO in 1945 for bravery on the Burma front. He was the leader of the 1951 conspiracy case and had been tried and convicted by a special tribunal. He was released in 1955. He joined the Pakistan People's Party in 1968. The General was articulate without being garrulous. We discussed psychic phenomena and extra sensory perceptions. I also told him about the detained hillmen from the Hill Tracts who were in the armed forces and my concern that they should not face any undue difficulties. He promised to ensure that. All armed forces

personnel hailing from East Pakistan were then in detention camps in Pakistan. I met some of them later.

I felt that it was necessary to lift the pall of gloom after the loss of East Pakistan, which, after all was a fait accompli. We needed to cheer up a bit. So, on 23 April, I held a biggish party at my new home. Many of my cabinet colleagues also attended including Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan whom Bhutto used to refer to as "Double Barrelled Khan" because the name had a Khan at both ends. I invited Mehdi Hasan, the famous ghazal singer, and most of the invitees listened to him from under a 'shamiana' in the garden. Upstairs there was dancing for those that had not acquired an ear for the ghazal, or who preferred to dance anyhow. The party set the tone and social life in Islamabad began to pick up.

On 28 April, we left for Swat at 9:10 a.m. The Austrian Ambassador, Mrs. Ploil, and their newly married son and daughter-in-law and also their Trade Commissioner joined me on this trip. Secretary Inyatullah, his wife Attiya and their children and the Deputy Commissioner were also with us. Just before crossing the Indus we passed the Attock Fort built by Emperor Akbar. It is occupied by the army and is not open to tourists like Rohtas Fort. After crossing the Attock Bridge we had tea at the charming little resthouse at Kund near the confluence of the Kabul River and the Indus, one markedly muddy, the other clear.

We reached Saidu Sharif, capital of Swat at 3:30 p.m. The road to 8700 ft high Malam Jabba, site of the future ski resort to be built with Austrian assistance, was impassable in parts on account of heavy snowfall. 100 labourers have been sent to clear the snow. At dinner at Prince Mian Gul Aurangzeb's palace the Commissioner of Malakand Division, which includes Swat and occupies about one third of the Province of NWFP, and his wife were noticeably absent. Prince Aurangzeb, Member of Parliament, the son and heir of the Wali and also son-in-law of President Ayub Khan told me quietly that the Commissioner had never once come to his parties. Later on the Commissioner informed me that he had been invited to the dinner only at 3:00 p.m. on the same day.

On 29 April at 9:30 am, we left in seven jeeps and had tea at a point about 700 feet below the proposed holiday resort at Malam Jabba. Then we climbed to the site, looked around and held discussions about the Pakistan Services Limited hotel plans and skiing facilities. The Deputy Commissioner of Swat was also with us. We drove back across the river and had lunch near the Golf Course, returning to Saidu at 5:00 p.m. At 9:50 p.m. we had dinner at Aman-e-Rum's house. He works for the PTDC. His father is the brother of the Wali.

On 30 April, our group left at 9:50 a.m. for Madian. It was cold and windy. The Commissioner's German wife provided us tea and delicious venison sandwiches. We then had an exhilarating drive amid a view of snowclad peaks and reached Kalam around 1:00 p.m. After lunch at Falakshair Hotel we visited some scenic spots. On return we played some bridge and had dinner. This was my first game of bridge after

coming to West Pakistan. Dr. Ploil was a good player and I later discovered that he loves to play whenever possible. I have been using my 8 mm Bolex movie camera. Hope the results turn out as satisfying as the reality.

I seem to come across astrologers wherever I go. In London I sought out a certain Johnson, who had been recommended but he was out of town so I went to see Doughlas from the Psychic Research Society. He fingered my wristwatch, which I had handed over to him, and after a minute had rattled off some predictions. I have to admit that most came true within a year. There was a noted astrologer-cum-palmist, a retired judge, whom I had met in Colombo in November 1971. In Karachi too I came across quite a few. Some had pronounced perceptive faculties. One was a clairvoyant, another read vibrations and the third read coffee cups. Justice Feroze Nana, a highly refined and respected man, introduced the clairvoyant Mumtaz to me. I remember the first meeting with the young bank official, for that is what Mumtaz was professionally, at Qasr-e-Naz, the Rest House in Karachi. He sipped his tea and stared at the ceiling. "Ask," he said to me after a pause. His eyes had a fixed, vacant stare. I asked about my family. He described certain members down to what they were then wearing, where they were and what they were doing. He described the location of the various rooms in my island home too. Later, on verification I found by and large he was right. It was an interesting experience. Another was an officer of the Pakistan Navy named Sabswari. He read vibrations and foretold the future. He described to me a foreign person I was going to meet in the very near future, and the place and circumstances. It came to pass precisely as he had described.

The coffee cup reader was Julia, an elderly Irish lady married to a Bengali gentleman Kassim Dupley. I had met her years ago in Chittagong. Her husband and Kakku, my uncle Birupaksha, had been class fellows at Presidency College, Calcutta, in the 1920s. In April 1972 I went to see her in Karachi with my friends Ali Jan and Halim Sharif. Amongst her predictions was a pronouncement. "I see you in a large hall with a lot of people. Yes, you are representing Pakistan. It's a country whose name begins with an 'N'. It will be good for you and the country, September/ October – but don't undertake voyages – don't go abroad before September."

I had received an invitation from Dr. G.P. Malalasekara to attend the 10th World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference to be held in Ceylon. On 20 May I left Karachi for Colombo. On 22 May it was announced that henceforth Ceylon would be Sri Lanka. I had an extensive tour of the country and met various Buddhist organization representatives and politial leaders. I also discussed tourism with the Minister Kalugalle a number of times and returned to Pakistan in early June. Our Ambassador Altaf Shaikh and his wife and the Embassy staff including Tayyab who accompanied me on most of my tours out of Colombo were very supportive and made my stay useful and enjoyable. However, it appears that for disregarding Julia's advice there was an unpleasant consequence. I lost a suitcase, which was bad enough but in it I had my movie camera too with a stack of films of Sri Lanka and personalities at the Conference, and of friends I had made. As for representing

Pakistan in a country whose name began with an "N", her vision proved uncannily accurate.

On 14 July, in the National Assembly we ratified the Simla Agreement by a voice vote. On 28 July in Lahore I called on General Azam Khan who was leading a retired life, and we exchanged memories of East Pakistan in the 1960s, when he was Governor.

On a visit to Karachi, on 5 August, I held a number of meetings with members of various minority communities and then motored down 35 miles, across the Hub River to the Gadani Beach in Balochistan. The beach had prospects for development as a tourist complex. In the evening I was invited to dinner at a certain Dr. Rizvi's house where he showed us colour slides of the Northern Areas including Hunza. After that with some friends I went to the Playboy Club. It is a nightclub minus the bunnies, where you could have a drink, dance and occasionally see a floor show. The best shows, however, were usually at Tufail Shaikh (Tony's) Excelsior Hotel, Avari's Beach Luxury Hotel and at the Metropole Hotel. Together with representatives from the Port authorities, tour operators and other cognoscenti we went to inspect the floorshows to make a selection for a "Karachi by nite" tour.

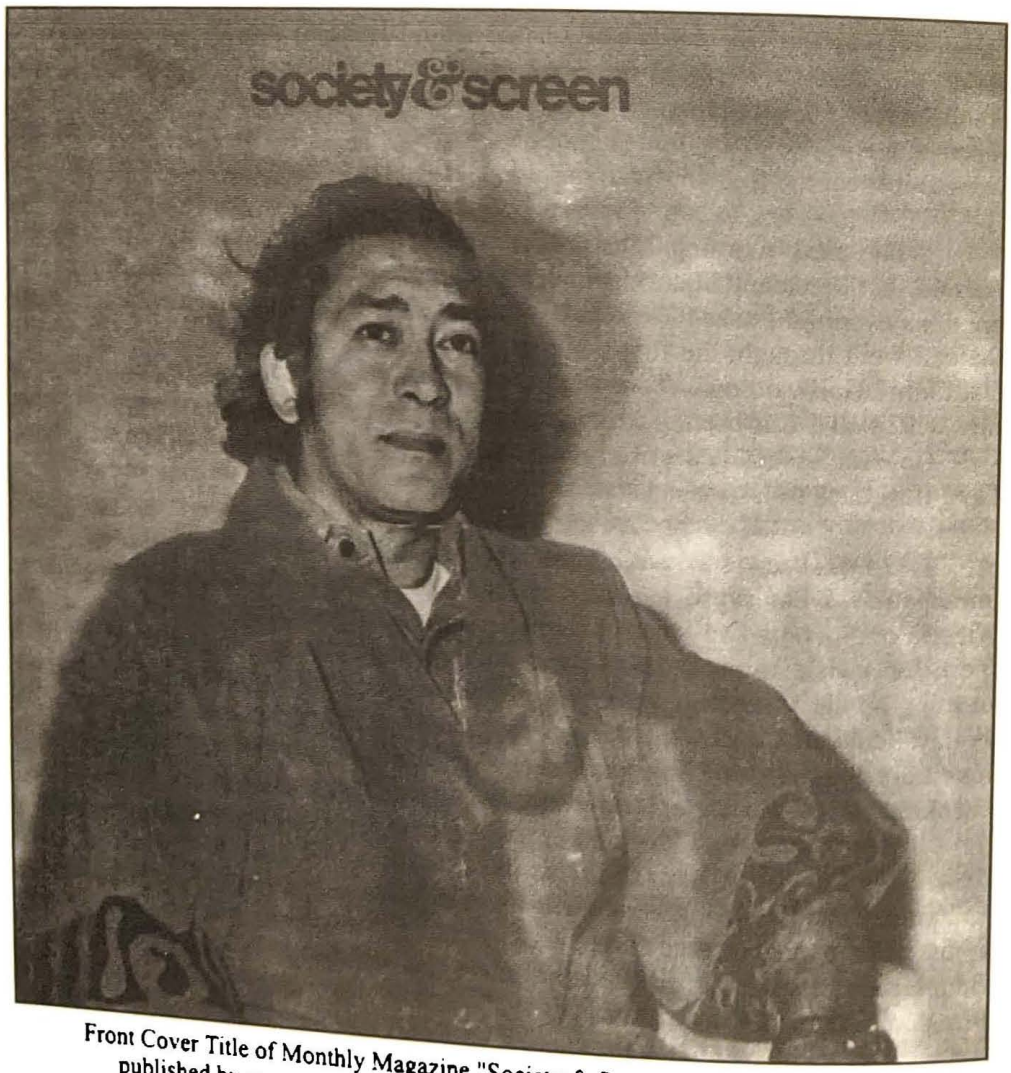
The next morning I was informed by my private secretary Tariq Saeed Haroon that President Bhutto had telephoned me from Rawalpindi several times the previous evening. I asked Tariq to try and get the President on the telephone. When the call went through, the first thing President Bhutto asked was, "Where were you last night? Gallivanting?" To avoid polemics I admitted the charge readily and told him where all I had been. The reason for the President's calls was the forthcoming U.N. General Assembly session. He wanted me to lead the delegation. The following day I flew back to Islamabad.

I had been speculating on the Irish lady's prediction with pleasurable anticipation. I envisaged a conference in Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria or Norway. Only the "N" turned out to be a city and not a country. And New York for a visit, to put it mildly, was not any the less welcome a destination. At a meeting on the 7th, the cabinet approved my assignment to the United Nations and on Friday, 15 September, I took the plane to London. As there was trouble in Damascus the flight was diverted to Frankfurt where the passengers were given a thorough checking. There was a great fear of bombs and hijackers at that time.

In London I met Didi, her husband Tony Grech, and their two little daughters. They lived in their own house in Farnham, Surrey. My brother-in-law was a jute expert, and worked for Louis Dreyfus, a firm with commercial interests in Bangladesh as well. Tony had come back recently from Dhaka. He had not been to Rangamati on this trip but had met my mother and sister Moitri in Dhaka and gave me what news he had of the Tracts. Things there were not pleasant. The family was alive and as well as could be in the circumstances. "They're all missing you," he said.

"They want you back." "I'm missing them, too," I replied. "Let's hope we can meet soon."

In the evening there was a dinner hosted by our High Commissioner Mian Mumtaz Khan Daultana for Begum Bhutto at his residence. She and her two older children Benazir and Mir Murtaza were returning from attending the Olympics. At that party I recall we met some English peers and parliamentarians and an eminent journalist. We also met a rather weird character. I remember comparing notes of our impression of him with Miss Benazir Bhutto, then a student at Radcliffe. Benazir had poise and a sense of humour that at times could be puckish. She was being pestered by the weird Pakistani but had dealt with him adroitly, with finesse, and with undiminished charm and wit.



Front Cover Title of Monthly Magazine "Society & Screen" Karachi, edited and published by renowned journalist (late) Asad Jaffery: Raja Tridiv Roy as "The Man of the year 1972"

CHAPTER II

Dream City New York

The gorgeous and cosmopolitan dream city New York might have had a different face and character if the burghers had decided to fight the invading soldiers of the Duke of York. In 1646 Peter Stuyvesant sailed to the new world as the Dutch West India Company's appointee as Director General of "New Netherland and the places situated thereabout, as well as the Island of Curacao, Buenaire, Aruba, and the dependencies and appurtenances thereof." His ships stopped at Curacao and then landed at New Amsterdam (later New York) on 11 May 1647..... In 1653 he established a Municipal Government in New Amsterdam on the cities of Holland. In the next 10 years despite his efforts Dutch influence on Long Island declined but he fought back the Swedes successfully, and he also kept the Indians under restraint. "In 1664 an English fleet appeared in the bay and demanded that the city capitulate to the Duke of York, who laid claim to all the land between the Connecticut River and Delaware Bay. Stuyvesant's plans for defence were opposed by the local burghers, and on 3 September 1664 new Amsterdam was surrendered to the English. Stuyvesant went home to Holland in 1665 to defend himself against charges of misconduct. He retired to New York in 1667, and lived on his farm on bouwerij, from which New York City's Bowery takes its name. He died in February 1672, at eighty years of age. He was buried beneath the chapel on his farm, which is now the site of St. Mark's Church." One wonders, what could have happened if the burghers had acted upon Stuyvesant's advice. In any case it speaks well of the English in that they allowed him to come back and live peacefully on his farm until his death.

My first experience of New York City was in 1963, when I visited the UN building as a tourist, but my first exposure to the UN General Assembly had been in 1964 when I was a member of the Pakistan delegation. One of the most vivid recollections of that session was Che Guevara in his olive green fatigues delivering a speech in the General Assembly and some people from the visitors' gallery throwing down "Go back to Cuba" leaflets. In the midst of the speech the whole building suddenly swayed and shuddered as though by an earthquake. Che completed his speech, totally unfazed. We heard someone had aimed a bazooka at the UN building from across the East River that however had exploded mid-stream. When we left the General Assembly hall and went outside, there were a lot of mounted police dispersing anti-Castro demonstrators on First Avenue.

It is ironic that although associated with Cuba, as everyone knows Che was an Argentine. Hitler was Austrian – born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with probably Czech ancestry, and not German. Likewise, Napoleon was a Corsican rather than a Frenchman proper (France had purchased Corsica from Italy in 1768, one year before he was born). Cleopatra of Egypt was of Greek origin, and the famous Empress Catherine of Russia (1729-1806) was the daughter of a minor

German princeling on the Polish border. Three of Queen Victoria's grandsons became Kings of England, Germany and Russia. So, many royal houses of Europe had little or no sanguinary connections with the countrymen they ruled.

Makes one ponder on the value and significance of labels like "citizenship" and "nationality," and the concept of nation. Someone who is a Bangladeshi today was a Pakistani before December 1971, and before August 1947 he or she was an Indian citizen. A man and his place of birth may undergo transformations of their nationality and citizenship without his being consulted, international borders being changed any number of times. He is just a bit of flotsam in the whirlwind of politics. Apart from countries in Europe and Africa before, between and after the two world wars, we have our share of shifting sands in Asia too, in no small measure. This is particularly true of the Chakmas and other Jumma ethnic nationalities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Russia sold Alaska to the US and Napoleon sold them the Louisiana territory. When Napoleon was asked why he had done that he had simply said, "I cannot defend it." Napoleon had known that if he had not sold it he might have lost it for nothing. Their inhabitants bettered their lot since, and the sellers got some money. The Hill Tracts people got only sorrow and misery and the British merely sold them down the drain.

In New York, I stayed at the Plaza Hotel. On 17 September 1972, I held a meeting at our U.N. Mission with Agha Shahi our Ambassador to China, Ambassador Iqbal Akhund our U.N. Rep., Jamsheed Marker our Ambassador in Canada, and other officials. On the following day we had our first meeting of the full delegation of 21 members, the largest ever Pakistan delegation to the United Nations. We had some prominent personalities including two ladies, Begum Akhtar Sulaiman and Begum Kulsoom Saifullah Khan. The former was the daughter of the former Prime Minister and founder of the Awami League, H.S. Suhrawardy, and was a persuasive conversationalist. The latter was the PPP leader from Peshawar, from the Saifullah Khan family. Their family have long been in politics. In 1936 one ancestor, a Khan Bahadur became a legislator. Because of her elegance and her amiable personality Begum Kulsoom Saifullah became the cynosure of many UN delegations. The General Assembly opened on the 19th, on the customary third Tuesday of September. On the 21st I called on the Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.

Chaudhry Sir Zafrullah Khan, one of the outstanding luminaries of pre-partition India and a leading light in the creation of Pakistan, was retiring from his long tenure as President of the International Court of Justice. He invited me to a lunch he hosted for the Secretary General. I met him a number of times later too. I also met his successor Judge Lakhs. Sir Zafrullah holds the record along with Krishna Menon for length of speech at the United Nations. The two used to wax and wane on the Kashmir issue. An intriguing conviction, an article of faith with the Ahmadiya community to which Sir Zafrullah belonged, is that Jesus escaped from Calvary to Kashmir, where he lived for many years, and is buried there.

In the midst of hectic diplomatic endeavours, a sidelight in those early days of the session was a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria. It was the annual dinner given by the "In UN We Believe" organization of businessmen in and around New York City. On this occasion Waldheim made a not too short speech. One bit was about the amount the US government paid to the UN in the form of contributions. It was, according to him, the equivalent of a price of one packet of cigarettes to the US citizen. David Frost, the British TV personality, spoke on the New York environment. He informed us that in an experiment out of ten mice exposed to the NY atmosphere, "only eight died of pollution. Two were mugged to death." To me New York is inimitable. Mugging cannot wither nor pollution stale her infinite variety. And despite the terrible and tragic events of 11 September 2001, life goes on in the Big Apple, in some ways daft – but distinctive, unique and cosmopolitan.

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7 October 1972 was a wet and dismal Saturday. My youngest sister Rakhi and I sat at either end of the back seat of the Embassy car. We were motoring from New York to Boston, to spend the weekend with friends from Dhaka days. Rakhi had stopped short of her degree from Mount Holyoke and skipped a semester, holidaying in Bermuda with family friends, the Lyles. The last of her sporadic letters had been to tell me of her projected departure for Kyoto, Japan, on a teaching assignment. That she had not completed her course at Mount Holyoke, got off the plane in Alaska, and had been living in Arizona for the last month, were intelligence I pieced together in dribs and drabs from telephonic conversations with friends in Boston. She had rung up at one in the morning – her favourite time for talking long distance with her eldest brother – to say she was in Arizona and would be coming to see me in New York in a couple of days. Rakhi could not sustain a conversation unless her favourite topic "love" formed the basis, or was interjected every now and again. And that was Rakhi dozing in the corner, taking a respite from her favourite topic.

It was father's twenty-first death anniversary and the first that I was spending away from home. In Rangamati aunts and cousins would come early in the morning and congregate in the Kitchen House, chopping vegetables, cooking, and invariably chattering away. Before midday we would be offering *dana* to the monks, and then the family would listen to *mantras* and *sutras*. After the monks left we would sit in long rows on the floor for a commemorative feast and eat off banana leaves resting on latticed bamboo tables called *mejang*. Early in the morning young girls gathered fresh flowers and wove them into garlands to place on father's almost life-size photograph hanging high on the wall in the front veranda. They had to stand on tiptoe on the octagonal Victorian marble table to do so. When he had that photograph taken at the wellknown photographic studio Bourne and Shephard in Kolkata – with reluctance for he was shy and retiring of disposition but was unable to withstand his sisters-in-law's insistence – he was 35 years old and dressed in full regalia with sword and turban. It was 1937 and he had gone to Government House, Kolkata, in durbar dress for his investiture. When I looked at that photograph, every year on this day since his death, and did my *pranam* – touching it and then my forehead – I was

always a small boy, even when I was older than the subject in the photograph. That one can never be older than one's parents merely proves that the relationship between humans is inherently outside the pale of age and time.

I looked at Rakhi. She had woken up and had a far away look. We entered New England. It was fall time, late afternoon. The leaves were of many shades and tints and hues. The landscape was a melody in colour. I was reminded of snatches of an old song – "Autumn leaves."

After the long drive and a refreshing shower John Rohde and I were chatting in the living room of his apartment in Boston. We were reminiscing about common friends. Rakhi and Candy were chatting in the kitchen – after putting Majagali, our friends' brand new baby to bed. Now and then the sound of their mingled laughter joined us. Suddenly Rakhi rushed into the room. "Mother," she shrieked. "Mother's on the phone. Hurry."

"Mother? Where from?" I went to the telephone in the other room.
"I have come to take you back," she said. There were tears in her voice.

The next day we went back to New York and mother came to my hotel. She looked more tired and harassed since I had last seen her about a year ago but her voice was the same and her spirit was unbroken. My uncle came with her as her escort. They brought me letters from the family, one from Angus and Moitri and one from Nilina Mashi, my mother's sister in Delhi.

The news of the Tracts I gleaned was sketchy. That the hillpeople were being oppressed was, of course, clear, and that in Panchri and other Chengi areas the Mukti Bahini as they entered from India had killed a few hundred unarmed and helpless Chakmas and Marmas. The children's letters were very satisfying – news of football matches they had won and drawn, in the field below Subal's tea shop, and presents they wanted me to send – camera and watch for my eldest daughter Chandra – who complained that I am always away on her birthday, poor girl – and watches for my eldest son Devasish and for my second son Sivasish. Waiki wrote his first letter to me and Troya sent a message.

Sheikh Mujib and Foreign Minister Samad had sent my mother and asked her to get me back. Mujib's *volte-face* was, of course, induced by Indian promptings because earlier when mother had wanted to meet him, Mujib had told the Mong Raja who had conveyed the request, "Tell her to go to West Pakistan." Now he told her, "Yes, he's been like me, held under duress in West Pakistan. Tell him to come back. We'll give him a hero's welcome."

In the first elections held in Bangladesh in 1972, the Hill Tracts was allotted two seats, one more than at the 1970 elections. Manabendra Narayan Larma and Chaithwaipru Roaza, a Marma headman and Chairman of Kalampati from the Chakma territory, both from the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peoples Party won, defeating

the Awami League candidates, the Bohmong Chief and my brother Kumar Samit (Johnny). Both apparently had hoped that by taking the Awami League nominations they could attenuate the hostile and repressive measures of the Awami League government.

A newspaper report said the Hill Tracts' representative Manabendra Narayan Larma had demanded autonomy in the assembly, but was only interrupted and insulted for his pains. In the Constituent Assembly M.N. Larma said, "You can not impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma, not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh – Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bengali – they (the hillpeople) can never be Bengali." On 15 February 1972 Manabendra Narayan Larma led a delegation to Sheikh Mujib with a five-point demand for autonomy for the Hill Tracts and the retention of the office and functions of the Chiefs. The last demand was accepted but without any formal constitutional provision as such. As for the other demands, the delegation was told to go back home and become Bengalis.

Now in New York, a day or so later, a senior Bangladeshi diplomat requested a meeting and over lunch in a restaurant tried to pressurize me. The proffered lures and temptations again were cabinet ministership or ambassadorship in the USA or elsewhere, as I chose and, of course, restitution of my rights and privileges. Yet by then they had passed the Bangladesh constitution without providing any special status at all for the Hill Tracts. In fact, they had taken away all safeguards for the Hill Tracts and had declared the hillpeople as Bengalis, a palpable absurdity. Neither the diplomat nor Mujib promised any measure of autonomy for the Hill Tracts. They made vague offers to try and do something for the Hill Tracts constitutionally but this, I knew, in the absence of concrete commitments was a subterfuge, to get me back and use me to control the people of the Tracts and to get them to accept Bangladesh rule as an ordinary district.

On the other hand the fact was that I would be reunited with my family and my people in the Hill Tracts, who needed me. My uncle also told me that Kamini Mohan Dewan, now eightytwo, the oldest and most respected of the Old Guard and other leaders were all demanding that the Bangladesh government get me back. They all repeatedly requested me to return. I knew I could not return, not in these circumstances, not in a manner that smacks of betrayal of trust, of confidence, of honour, of sacrificing principles and loyalty. And I knew that once I was under Mujib's authority I would be forced to serve his government and his policies and these went directly against my people's just demand for autonomy. Bargaining with Sheikh Mujib for the Tracts from within Bangladesh would be futile. If he meant well he should first grant the Tracts autonomy, and then ask me to go back. The way this manoeuvre was being conducted indicated that they obviously wanted to use me but not to grant autonomy to my people.

A Buddhist member of the Indian parliament with a historic name, not a Jumma, and a member of the Indian delegation to the 27th UN General Assembly

session, wanted to meet me. I told mother he could come to my suite at the Plaza but the gentleman preferred neutral ground. I asked mother to invite him to the Hilton Coffee Room, not far away. We met there one afternoon. He was a trifle nervous. He spoke at length of the benefits to my people if I returned. He also said India and Bangladesh would not like me to make a speech at the UN against them. I said this suited me fine, for Pakistan did not desire an acrimonious debate either and we would be very happy if they asked the Yugoslav delegation to postpone the item of Bangladesh entry into the United Nations from the agenda. It was well known that an attempt to gain admission at this stage would be fruitless; even if it were passed in the General Assembly it would be vetoed in the Security Council. My question, therefore, was why if India really wanted Bangladesh entry into the UN were they pursuing this futile course? And, despite the Simla Accord forcing Pakistan to a confrontation on the floor of the House? The parliamentarian promised to try and get his delegation to avoid a confrontation at the UN; they did not want one either.

He then went on to talk of the difficulties of the Buddhist population in the Tracts. I told him the problems would not disappear merely by my going back. The obvious solution was to grant them autonomy with provincial status as demanded by them. It was at the second meeting, when mother was not present, and there were only the two of us at the Hilton Coffee Room again, that he said the Bangladesh Government might put my family on trial if I refused to return.

"My six-year-old daughter too?" I said. "I wonder what crime she could be accused of."

The Indian army, as soon as they had entered Rangamati, had imprisoned my two brothers. They later said it was "protective custody" and it might well have been though my brothers were not too happy as prisoners. The Indian army also confiscated all our firearms, including ceremonial swords and small cannons, a pair only about ten inches long, with engravings. They were merely decorative heirlooms. None of the shotguns and hunting rifles were left behind either. However, the Tibetan soldiers in the Indian army were very sympathetic, being Buddhists, especially when they saw an embroidered picture of the Potala, the Dalai Lama's palace at Lhasa, at the Rajbari.

The Indian delegate then said that I should not make the Pakistan policy statement at the General Assembly. "Let someone else do it. You can avoid it easily. Let some Muslim make it, we don't mind." I told him I was going to make the speech and no one else and it was going to be a hard-hitting one. "We're going to bring out facts you'd not like the world to know of." He said if I made the speech the indigenous people of the Tracts might become more restive; as it is they were a problem. But if they did and if they suffered, how would I feel?

"Give them provincial autonomy. And make my wife, Rani Arati, the Regent during my 13-year-old son's minority. Things will then improve. My going back now is out of the question. I'm striving for an honourable settlement between the three

parties and once that is achieved I can go – at least on visits." We talked back and forth until he suddenly came out with another proposal. "I understand how you feel honour bound, and, Raja Sahib, believe me I admire you for this. But for the greater good of your people, who look to you for guidance, who are crying for your return – the right course is to say to President Bhutto that your responsibility to your distressed people leaves you no option but to go back to them."

When that did not work, he tried a different tack.

"All right, after finishing the UN responsibility," he said unctuously, "when you reach London, then you can tell your President that you've done your job; and return to your people."

I thanked him for his concern for my people as a fellow Buddhist and urged him to try and help them. "Why not return the POWs (Prisoners-of-war)?" I asked again. "We can sort out this tangle once India does that."

He told me President Bhutto had been in telephonic conversation with Sheikh Mujib on that score recently. Then suddenly he asked if I knew an attractive young lady from the subcontinent who was working in New York.

"Yes," I replied, "I've met her two or three times – socially."

"She's a CIA agent," he said. "She gave out, even before your mother came, that you would not desert Pakistan. She's dangerous. Please avoid her."

I was amused because I knew I had not discussed this question with her as the question was not there before my mother sprang it on me. And if I did talk about things with the lady, they were apolitical in nature and not about my personal position with regard to the family in the Tracts either. Whether she was a CIA agent I did not know, nor was it my concern. If she was I would have been surprised because she was a rather emotional person who on occasion flared up due to purely personal reasons. There was another woman I had met, who certainly conformed more with the Mata Hari image and who sometimes made seemingly innocuous or provoking comments calling for responses. For instance if she wanted to know if I intended returning to the Hill Tracts she would say, "I bet you can't go back home." Once she said, "Your people should get their independence. But you have to help them of course." "It is autonomy they have been demanding, provincial autonomy," I had answered back. "And it's a perfectly just demand. We've wanted to run our internal affairs all along, ever since the British came. And before then, of course, we were independent."

CHAPTER III

General Assembly Session

The Pakistan delegation to the 27th Session of the UN General Assembly in 1972 was by far the largest in its history. Not only was I leading the largest UN delegation of my country but I had the honour of being the first non-Muslim to ever head such a delegation. When we reached New York we found Pakistan's image tarnished due to the events of 1971 and most of the cards stacked against us. Nearly a hundred countries had recognized Bangladesh and were keen for her admission to the United Nations.

Over 90,000 prisoners of war, the majority being civilians, were in Indian POW camps and some of them were being killed. Even as the General Assembly session was proceeding, newspapers in New York would carry reports of further POW killings in Indian camps every now and then. Pakistanis in New York staged a demonstration and took out a long procession protesting against the killing of unarmed prisoners. In fact after an on-the-spot enquiry, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) considered some of these killings "cold-blooded murders." In any event this detention of POWs was in violation of Article 4 of the Geneva Conventions wherein it is clearly stipulated that on the cessation of active hostilities POWs have to be repatriated. Due to insufficient dissemination of the problem people generally were more aware, if not more concerned, with the small number of American POWs in Vietnam than with the Pakistani POWs in India.

The 27th was the first United Nations General Assembly Session after the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war. The issues concerning Pakistan, India and Bangladesh were somewhat intricate if not intractable. Although India and Pakistan had already signed the Simla Agreement of 1972, little had by then been done to implement it. According to the Simla Agreement the two countries resolved to put an end to the conflicts and confrontations that have marked their relations and to work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of a durable peace in the subcontinent. In order to achieve this objective it was agreed to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them; to peacefully resolve the basic issues of conflicts; to respect each other's national unity, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality; to refrain from threat or use of force against each other and to prevent hostile propaganda directed against each other. To restore and normalize relations step by step, the two countries agreed that the Indian and Pakistani forces would be withdrawn to their respective sides of the international border, that in Jammu and Kashmir the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of 17 December 1971, should be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side and that the withdrawal of forces would take place within 30 days of the coming into force of the Simla agreement.

Although I had seen Sardar Swaran Singh in the UN in 1964 and had enjoyed the thrusts and parries between him and then Foreign Minister Bhutto – in repeated exercise of rights of reply on the Kashmir issue – I had not spoken to him. Nowadays the rights of reply in the United Nations debates are exercised at the end of the day. It was livelier then, and more spontaneous, if at times interminable, like the harangues of Krishna Menon and the persuasive oratory of Sir Zafrullah Khan even earlier. I met Swaran Singh at a diplomatic lunch where I happened to sit next to Andrei Gromyko, who in the course of conversation asked me if I was Bhutto's cousin. He may have mistaken me for "his talented cousin" Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, Governor of Sind at the time. Swaran Singh and I exchanged courtesies but had no conversation as such. After lunch he came to me and expressed the hope that the troop withdrawals would be completed in a few days' time. "I hope so, too," I agreed. "I don't see why it's being delayed." Swaran Singh said something to the effect that local commanders were trying to sort out details and he was sure it would be over in a few days. Indian and Pakistani troops were supposed already to have returned to their respective sides of the international border.

After lunch we all went to the General Assembly and heard his policy statement. He injected a new note to the Simla Agreement – making withdrawal of Indian troops from occupied Pakistan territory conditional upon completion of the delineation of the line of control in Kashmir. This was contrary to the Simla Agreement wherein troop withdrawals from each other's territories were to have been completed within a month of the ratification of the agreement. Subsequently, India found some other excuse. Special emissaries of President Bhutto, Secretary General Aziz Ahmad (subsequently Minister of State and then Foreign Minister) and Special Assistant Rafi Raza (later cabinet minister) were dispatched to Delhi. Then another date was set for Indian troop withdrawals. This later date too India had ignored. And now they inserted a new condition – all in disregard of their international commitments.

We decided not to use the right of reply. We would speak on this in my policy statement. Though the emphasis on our strategy shifted focal points, at no time did we lose sight of our objective. Our task was made easier by the support we received from President Bhutto, who not only backed us up, but gave us a free hand too. We were in principle not opposed to the admission of Banglasdesh into the UN provided Resolution 307 of 1971 was implemented. In the course of our intensive lobbying, world delegations gradually got to understand our reasonable and pragmatic stand better. Although some countries had hoped that China's vetoing Bangladesh entry into the UN at the Security Council would isolate China, and Pakistan, they now found the contrary to be the case. Nations of the world tended to admire China for sticking to her principles.

In view of the Simla Agreement and Pakistan's overtures toward the resolution of the problems in the subcontinent, an acrimonious debate on the question of admission of Bangladesh in the General Assembly was bound to retard the process of normalization of relations between the powers of the subcontinent. So we managed

to get most countries to appreciate the inadvisability of a debate on Bangladesh admission, or if that was unavoidable, then the desirability of formulating an agreed solution among the parties concerned. We proposed a package deal, which evoked a good response from Foreign Minister Schumann of France and the Foreign Minister of Italy, both of whom promised to work in its favour, particularly because the former had put forward a somewhat similar suggestion himself some months earlier. Our package deal envisaged simultaneous agreement on recognition of Bangladesh, synchronized release of Bengalis from Pakistan and Pakistani POWs from India and a meeting between the leaders of Pakistan and Bangladesh. If these did not succeed the existing Yugoslav draft resolution for admission would have to be amended with regard to its implementation of the relevant UN resolutions.

We never lost sight of the fact that China had stood by her principles and by us and we worked in close cooperation with the Chinese delegation. Western educated Senior Vice Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-Hua (later Foreign Minister) and Ambassador Huang-Hua, who also became foreign minister at a later stage, though new at the UN game were extremely clear-headed and quick in their grasp of developments. Chiao Kuan-Hua, over six foot tall, is a man of great dignity. He is hardly the inscrutable mandarin, for he is forthright with a lively sense of humour. We used to have free and frank discussions and at a meeting at the Chinese Embassy one day, when we recommended a shift of strategy he asked me to give him my opinion and reasons. After I had explained a point, which he probably understood perfectly – the efficient and attractive Miss Tang interpreting for forms sake nevertheless – Chiao Kuan-Hua stared ahead for a few moments while we sipped Chinese tea. "Bastards," he said then, bursting into English and waving his arms about. He was alluding to a non-Asian power that was playing a dubious role. "They are bastards." Then he burst out laughing. He supported my view and we worked out another strategy. The position of China for the stand taken by Pakistan with regard to Bangladesh entry to the UN was clear and convincing proof of their friendship and support that was highly principled. They were not against Bangladesh entry into the UN, only that she complies with the preconditions.

Upto the latter part of November, the many laudable efforts of the statesmen of the world to sort out the Bangladesh issue had not found fruition. On our part, there was no let-up in our lobbying and in our close cooperation with the Chinese delegation as well as with those of our friends. We were neither rigid nor dogmatic and our reasonable attitude was commented upon by many delegations. I quote below a part of my main speech in the General Assembly (Document A/PV.2059):

"The present climate of discussion and accommodation should be seized upon to promote a process of reconciliation among all powers... The Simla Agreement, between India and Pakistan, accepts the principle of non-use of force and of settlement of disputes by peaceful means. It provides for the withdrawal of forces from each other's territories and envisages a step-by-step approach for settlement of the remaining problems...

The recognition of 'Bangladesh' is different for Pakistan than for other States. It bears upon an important principle. We cannot ignore the fact that the territory, which now proclaims itself as 'Bangladesh' was an integral part of Pakistan, and that it was sundered from Pakistan by the use of armed force. The events of last year have already eroded the principle of the territorial integrity of States, enshrined in the Charter. There is no doubt a new reality in the subcontinent. But if this precedent is not to imperil the security and integrity of all multinational or multilingual States, it is important that its legitimacy be consecrated not through Pakistan's coerced recognition of its existence, but through a freely negotiated and just settlement of the issues which interpose serious obstacles to the recognition of 'Bangladesh' and its admission to the United Nations."

One or two countries had sought to isolate China and Pakistan and use the United Nations as a forum for their propaganda. China had made her position known. She had left no room for doubt or ambiguity. Her principled stand was that the question of admission of Bangladesh did not arise until Security Council Resolution 307 of 1971 was implemented, and until Bangladesh satisfied the conditions for eligibility. Resolution 307 of the Security Council states:

"Demands that a durable cease-fire and cessation of all hostilities in all areas of conflict be strictly observed and remain in effect until withdrawals take place, as soon as practicable of all armed forces to their respective territories and to positions which fully respect the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir supervised by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan;

Calls upon all member states to refrain from any action, which may aggravate the situation in the subcontinent or endanger international peace;

Calls upon all those concerned to take all measures necessary to preserve human life and for the observance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to apply in full their provisions as regards the protection of wounded and sick, prisoners of war and civilian population;

Calls for international assistance in the relief of suffering and the rehabilitation of refugees and their return in safety and dignity to their homes and for all cooperation with the Secretary General to that effect;

Authorises the Secretary General to appoint if necessary a Special Representative to lend his good offices for the solution of humanitarian problems; and requests the Secretary General to keep the Council informed without delay on developments relating to the implementation of this resolution;

Decides to remain seized of the matter and to keep it under active consideration."

The majority view among the delegations of the world was that there should be no debate on the question of admission of Bangladesh in the UN during the 27th Session. My delegation lobbied intensely toward this end and welcomed this attitude because we wished to avoid any action that might retard the process of reconciliation and amity in the subcontinent. We cooperated with the individual as well as collective efforts of member countries toward finding a solution to the problems that beset us.

The Bangladesh delegation, which had achieved observer status at the United Nations had not made a very good impression. To every proposal made to them by various delegations in an effort to resolve the deadlock, they gave a standard and unvarying reply – "Pakistan must first recognize Bangladesh." In the lounges of the United Nations on a number of occasions Bangladesh delegates were seen in discussion with me as well as with members of our delegation, particularly with Begum Akhtar Sulaiman, the daughter of H.S. Suhrawardy, the founder of the Awami League. Yet when the press reported this fact the Bangladesh representatives denied it point-blank and even had a bulletin of this denial circulated in the UN lobbies. These antics did not impress seasoned diplomats or the press.

When an agreement on the draft resolution had been reached after intensive discussions involving a large number of delegations, it was decided to call a short meeting of the General Assembly on 28 November for adoption of the two resolutions without debate and without a vote. The two drafts would be introduced by the President of the General Assembly, who would then read out the agreed text of the declaration. After adoption of the resolutions, delegations would make known their respective positions. At the last minute, after the agreement had already been formulated, objections were raised by certain delegations. This embarrassed the Yugoslav Ambassador Maesjov, sponsor of the resolution for Bangladesh admission. He clearly admitted his frustration with some of his "allies" and conceded that the Pakistan delegation had been extremely reasonable all along.

The last-minute hitch occurred when it was suggested that the adoption of the resolutions be postponed on the ground that the Bangladesh delegation had not obtained instructions. This created a furore even amongst the co-sponsors of the Yugoslav resolution. There were open remarks extremely critical of the attitude and behaviour of the Bangladesh delegation. They were termed "childish" and "obstinate". Many diplomats lost their cool and there were nearly a hundred of them milling around, and chiding the Bangladesh delegates and their supporters – in this instance it had boiled down to two countries. I sat and watched from a corner of the Indonesian lounge, quietly smoking a cigarette. (I used to smoke quite heavily then. I gave up the habit at a London hospital in 1975 after I had my gall bladder removed). After a while, being sorely outnumbered and threatened by their own supporters, the Bangladesh delegation gave in and it was decided finally that the two resolutions would be adopted on the following day, 29 November.

We were fortunate in receiving support for our reasonable and principled stand from the majority of the UN membership. The untiring efforts of a number of countries and particularly the Iranian and Turkish Ambassadors in finally negotiating an agreed formula were noteworthy. The agreed solution envisaged two draft resolutions and the President of the General Assembly's speech linking the two, thus constituting an inter- dependence in adopting both the resolutions without debate and without a vote.

Resolutions

2937 (XXVII) Admission of New Members;

The General Assembly

Having noted the application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for admission to membership in the United Nations,

Having also noted the Special Report of the Security Council in this regard,

Reaffirming the principle of universality of membership of the United Nations in accordance with the Charter,

Considering that the People's Republic of Bangladesh is eligible for membership in the United Nations,

Expresses the desire that the People's Republic of Bangladesh will be admitted to membership in the United Nations at an early date.

2938 (XXVIII) Admission of New Members

The General Assembly

Having in mind the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council Resolution 307 (1971) of 21 December 1971,

Having noted with satisfaction the steps taken so far to facilitate the restoration of conditions of normalcy in the South Asian subcontinent, notably the Simla Agreement,

Mindful of the fact that the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 require the release and repatriation of prisoners of war without delay after the cessation of active hostilities,

Considering that the solution of all outstanding problems including the return of military and civilian personnel to their respective countries is important for the establishment of a climate of peace and tranquillity in the area,

Expressing the hope that all parties will refrain from any act, which could jeopardize the prospects of settlement and render more difficult eventual reconciliation,

Expresses the desire that the parties concerned make all possible efforts, in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect to reach a fair settlement of the issues that are still pending and calls for the return of the prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the relevant provisions of Security Council Resolution 307 (1971).

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

The Assembly has before it the Draft Resolution in Document AIL. 633, which expresses the desire that Bangladesh will be admitted to membership in the United Nations at an early date, and the Draft Resolution in Document AIL. 685 which expresses the desire that the parties concerned make all possible efforts, in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, to reach a fair settlement of the issues that are still pending, and calls for the return of the Prisoners of War in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the relevant provisions of the Security Council Resolution 307 (1971).

After extensive consultations, it is proposed that these two Draft Resolutions be adopted together without debate and without a vote.

This procedure will give expression to the consensus of this Assembly which is in favour of the admission of Bangladesh and the Assembly is also in favour of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 307 (1971), as indicated above. It is also the general opinion that the admission of Bangladesh to the United Nations should be viewed along with the overall solution of the existing political, legal and humanitarian problems. It is, therefore, essential to view this simultaneous adoption of these two Draft Resolutions as constituting an interdependence between these two viewpoints. A peaceful solution on the subcontinent should be promoted: in this context the Simla Agreement is to be welcomed.

Since, as I understand it, it is possible for the Assembly to agree with and adopt these two Draft Resolutions without a vote it is clearly understood that any delegation wishing to do so would be free to make statements on the subject after the adoption of the two Draft Resolutions.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to follow that procedure and to adopt these two Resolutions without debate and without a vote....."

The two Resolutions were adopted. I had had a few telephonic conversations with President Bhutto from New York. In one such conversation after congratulating us he said, "We will give you a hero's welcome when you come back, Raja Sahib." Contrary to protocol and all traditions, the President himself, the whole cabinet, parliamentarians, officials and members of the public had assembled at the Rawalpindi Airport on 19 December 1972. I was not prepared for such a grand reception and in fact felt extremely embarrassed. On alighting, the President embraced me and after offering congratulations he escorted me down the red-carpeted reception line.

"All this was totally unnecessary," I said.

"No, no, all this was necessary," he replied.

The airport ceremonies ended with the President and I heading a motorcade towards my residence in Islamabad. The streets were jammed with attractive arches and bunting and masses of jubilant people shouting slogans and showering flower petals on us as we inched forward.

A report in the "Dawn" of 20 December read

He (The President) paid tributes to the patriotism, dignity and sense of respect for principles of Raja Tridiv Roy and said this was the reason that he himself had come to the airport to receive him, setting aside protocol. People who served the nation and could offer sacrifies for it must be respected, he added.

Agency reports add: The President paid rich tributes to Raja Tridiv Roy and described him a "great patriot" and a friend.

He said despite the best efforts by the Bangladesh and the Indian. Governments, Raja Tridiv Roy pleaded Pakistan's case very efficiently and turned down all temptations offered to him to desert Pakistan's delegation and return to Bangladesh.

In this connection, the President disclosed that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman even sent Raja Tridiv Roy's mother to New York to persuade him to return to his people but he refused. This, he said, showed his great sense of patriotism for which the people of Pakistan are grateful to him.

He said several things were said against Raja Tridiv Roy within Pakistan but the President declared, he had always belief in his friends as he knew them fully well. He was certain that a patriot like Raja Tridiv Roy would never betray him and Pakistan.

The President assured Raja Tridiv Roy that he can live in Pakistan as our brother as long as he wanted to. "The day you decide to return to East Pakistan, we will be happy to allow you and there must not be any misunderstanding about this", he assured.

The President said that a time will come when the misunderstanding existing between the people of the two Wings will disappear and that Raja Tridiv Roy will be

able to visit Chittagong and Rangamati. He assured him that he will also accompany him to Rangamati and Dhaka, where he would be able to meet his brothers.

A report in "The Pakistan Times" said:

Raja Tridiv Roy, leader of the Pakistan delegation to the UN General Assembly, was accorded a hero's welcome by President Bhutto, his Cabinet and tens of thousands of cheering people at Islamabad Airport this afternoon.

In his welcome speech, the President said he had set aside protocol and come to receive his own Minister in order to show his appreciation for Raja Tridiv Roy's services to Pakistan rendered at the United Nations. Unless those who served the nation with devotion were honoured, Pakistan would not produce such people, he added.

The President said he had decided to send Raja Tridiv Roy because he had been elected from East Pakistan and was acquainted with the situation in Bangladesh. The Chief of the Chakmas from Chittagong, the Raja was neither a member of the ruling party nor a Muslim, but he was a Pakistani, the President added amidst thunderous applause.

Recounting details of the quiet diplomacy that had thwarted Bangladesh's over-confident bid to gate-crash into the United Nations, the President said Pakistan had worked for a just cause. He had established contact with Peking and pointed out to the Chinese leaders that while Bangladesh wanted UN membership it was not honouring the world body's own resolutions.

President Bhutto congratulated Raja Tridiv Roy and his delegation on their great success in the General Assembly. While Raja Tridiv Roy was away for three months safeguarding Pakistan's vital interests in the United Nations, a lot of work was being done here in the delegation's support..... Referring to Raja Tridiv Roy's comments in New York, the President said he too believed that a day would come when not only the Chakma Chief but he would also be able to go with the Raja to Chittagong and Dhaka. Turning to Raja Tridiv Roy, the President said this was his country and he could stay here as long as he liked and he would be given all respect. But if he should ever want to return to his kith and kin he would be free to go, and there would be no misunderstanding, the President concluded.

Earlier the President had warmly received Raja Tridiv Roy as he came down the gangway of the PIA Boeing. Then he presented all the Cabinet colleagues, Special Assistants, MNAs, and MPAs, Central Secretaries and the city elite. After the President's speech, the Raja was given a ceremonial drive through the flagbedecked streets, which were lined by throngs of cheering people.

The welcoming ceremony culminated in a dinner given in my honour at Flashman's Hotel by President Bhutto, at which he and I both made speeches.

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Raja Tridiv Roy: Being received by President Bhutto on return from leading Pakistan Delegation at UN General Assembly Session (September to December) at Chaklala Airport Rawalpindi on 19 December 1972.

Raja Tridiv Roy (Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs & Tourism): During his visit to Lahore with Malik Meraj Khalid, then Chief Minister of Punjab (left) and the President, Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (right)

CHAPTER IV

Gligt, Hunza, Taxila and Ancient Kings

I had been playing golf regularly, usually with Nasser Abbas Mirza, a tall handsome Kashmiri Muslim friend of Tibetan stock from Skardu, Baltistan, now part of the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Earlier on it had been a part of Ladakh, known as Little Tibet, within the 86,023 square mile state of Jammu and Kashmir. As per the Line of Control of 1972, 32, 358 square miles form the Pakistan controlled part and 53, 665 square miles the Indian controlled part. In Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time Kashmir, as well as a part of Afghanistan formed a part of his domain, Kashmir having been annexed to the Sikh Kingdom in 1819. After the annexation of Ranjit's Punjab in 1849, the British sold Jammu and Kashmir for 68 lakhs of rupees to Raja Gulab Singh, somewhat as Napolean had sold the Louisiana territory to the Americans. The liberated or Pakistani part consists of Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas, about a third of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir, and about two thirds forms the Indian administered part.

As Minister for Tourism I had the opportunity of visiting the scenic splendours of Northern Pakistan and some of the historic spots like Gilgit, also a part of Jammu and Kashmir State. On 1 November 1947, the Azad Forces threw out the Maharaja's army and liberated an area of 28,000 sq km comprising Gilgit, Baltistan, Diamer, Ghizer and Gangche. A.H. Francke has written a history of Baltistan and Ladakh. There are, however, variations in the accounts by different writers on the liberation of Gilgit and of the revolt against the Maharaja's forces that led to the area joining Pakistan.

On the outskirts of the town of Gilgit there are huge rock carvings of the Buddha, and ancient cave drawings of hunters and animals. Beyond Gilgit there is the splendrous Astore valley and the Rama Lake. Regrettably, the mountainsides were leached and as a consequence many of the children there had goitres due to iodine deficiency. Hunza, the embodiment of Shangrila made famous by a film based on James Hilton's 1933 novel "Lost Horizon" is another attraction. There the air is pure, lifestyle simple, and almost everyone lives long. There is also the Kaghan Valley with Brown and Rainbow Trout and the nomadic tribes like the Gujjars with their cattle herds, in seasonal migrations unchanged for at least a couple of thousand years. Tucked away six miles above Naran at the end of a meandering path and a glacier that one crosses on surefooted mountain ponies, is the 3300 metre mountain top lake Saif-ul-Malook.

Another picturesque area in the north is the Swat Valley. In ancient times it was known as Udyana with more than fourteen hundred Buddhist monasteries, according to the Chinese pilgrim Huan Tsang, who came to these parts around 630 AD during the reign of the last of the great Buddhist emperors in India, who

encouraged Buddhist arts and the Dhamma (Righteousness), King Harsha Vardan of Kanauj. The Tibetan Emperor Sron Tsan Gampa was greatly influenced by his two Buddhist Queens, the Princess Bhrukuti daughter of King Amsuvarman of Nepal and the Chinese Emperor's daughter Wenching, whom he married in 641 AD. He sent emissaries to India, Nepal and China for Buddhist books and teachers.

About a century later, his descendant Thi Sron Detsan ascended the throne when he was only thirteen years old. In 747, advised by his family priest, Santarakshita, he sent emissaries to India to invite a learned monk to establish the Buddhist order in Tibet. They went to Padmasambhava, a reputed Guru of the Tantric Yogachara school, and brother-in-law of Santarakshita. Guru Padmasambhava, originally from Udyana, at that time resident of Nalanda Buddhist University in modern day Bihar, accepted the invitation and proceeded to Tibet in 747 AD. He overcame the Bon Shamans through his own prowess in psychic power and converted the practitioners of the Bon religion to Buddhism. In Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim and in the Himalyan foothills in India and Nepal he is revered as Guru Rin-Po-Che or "the Precious Guru."

Sir H. Yule, the great geographer writes (Marco P. I. 155) "Udyana lay to the north of Peshawar, on the Swat river, but from the extent assigned to it by Huan Tsang, the name probably covered a large part of the whole hill region south of the Hindu Kush, from Chitral to the Indus, as indeed it is represented in the map of Vivian de St. Martin [Pelerinas Buddhists, ii]." (Fa Hian regards it as the most northerly province of India, and in his time the food and clothing of the people were similar to those of Gangetic India.)

Udyana, the Guru's land, was famed for the proficiency of its priests in sorcery, exorcism, and magic. Huan Tsang says regarding Udyana: "The people are in disposition somewhat sly and crafty. They practice the art of using charms. The employment of using magical sentences is with them an art and a study." And in regard to the adjoining country of Kashmir, also intimately related to Lamaism, Marco Polo a few centuries later says: "Kashmir is a province inhabited by people who are idolaters (i.e. Buddhists)".

Queen Elizabeth II visited Swat in the early 1960s. When British diplomats resident in Islamabad suggested she spend three days there, the Wali, as the ruler is termed, retorted: "What am I going to do with her for three whole days here?" Prince Mian Gul Aurangzeb, the son of the last Wali, has been one of the longest serving among the elected members of Parliament. At the end of the 1990s he became the Governor of Balochistan, and then of the NWFP for a short while, until the Army coup that toppled the Nawaz Sharif government and installed the Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf on 12 October 1999. Prince Aurangzeb has always been a defender of the heritage of Swat, comprising innumerable excavated ruins of monasteries, stupas, statues, and other artefacts of Buddhist civilization.

In the early 1970s, the Chinese were building the Karakoram Highway from Islamabad to the Chinese border at the 4733 metre (15,528 feet) high Khunjerab Pass in Xinjiang Province but the Pakistani special agencies wished to keep this bit of information hush hush. So, the Nothern Areas of Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu were closed to foreigners. We had to obtain a waiver in a cabinet meeting for President Bhutto's guest Sam Yorty in the spring of 1973. I accompanied Sam Yorty, for 17 years Mayor of Los Angeles, to Hunza. High up in the Pamir Mountains, bordering Chinese Turkestan Hunza had been a tributary state under the Maharaja of Kashmir. The language of the people was Brushaski and while they and their neighbouring Nagar, were both of the Shia sect, the Hunzakuts were the followers of the Agha Khan, and except in the case of the royal families of both the houses of Hunza and Nagar intermarriages were rare and the two peoples were not usually the best of friends.

In a large group we went by plane from Rawalpindi to Gilgit. Often these flights cannot land due to poor visibility and have to return but we were lucky this time. From Gilgit we continued our journey in jeeps along the Karakoram Highway, the ancient trade route to Sinkiang. The road was then being constructed with proper gradients to make it an all weather motorable road. The Pakistan Army engineers and the Chinese builders did a remarkable job but at the cost of many lives, officially 810 Pakistani and 82 Chinese, lost due to accidents in the forbidding terrain.

A large and voluble lady named Rene Taylor accompanied Sam Yorty and his wife. She had written a book or two about Hunza and had visited it some years earlier. Mir Jamal Khan of Hunza had provided a room in his palace with a magnificent view of the lofty snowcapped peaks for the Yortys. The lady writer "recognized" the view through the window and exclaimed delightedly that it was the same. Not one of her brightest observations for, unlike us mortals, these lofty snow mountains tend to retain their shape over the years. She required a bit of persuasion to move to another room but overall she was not a difficult guest.

On the return journey the outbound plane was delayed at Gilgit due to bad weather, a common feature of air travel in these parts. The chief guest, however, was quite upset because he was going to attend the Olympics and, we were told that come what may we had to ensure that he was not delayed. Finally, two hours later the weather god relented and the plane could take off from Gilgit, and the command like King Canute's to the waves did not have to be tested a second time. We managed to send him off from Islamabad on time for his Olympiad destination. After he got back Yorty stood for the mayorship again but this time the electorate of Los Angeles would not have him any more.

On another trip, on 2 November 1973 I left for Khunjerab Pass and had lunch on the way at Passu. Onwards, we passed an occasional yak on the lonesome road before stopping for tea with the Chinese road builders at Dih. They offered us delicious melons that they had grown near their camps in the area. Khunjerab was just a signboard marking the border in the midst of bleak highland wastes. In order to

open the Northern Areas (Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar and Skardu) to international tourism, we in the Tourism Ministry had to fight every inch of the way against the ostrich-like opposition of certain agencies. I visited Tokyo sometime later and got the Association of Mountain Architects to help us with an architect to design hotels for the Northern Areas. Kunio Hashimoto, nominated by the Association, made some beautiful designs that were functional, economical and aesthetically pleasing in that they harmonized with the landscape.

In the north, I had seen some magnificent landscapes among the mountains of the Himalayas, the Hindukush and the Karakoram, innumerable Buddha statues, remnants of monasteries and stupas of Gandhara style in Taxila, the Peshawar Valley and Swat, and Ashokan rock edicts like the one in Mansehra. In Sindh, excavations like those of Moenjodaro and Kot Diji, and in the Punjab the excavations in Harappa, all predate and represent a culture more advanced than that of the pastoral Aryans that invaded these parts. At the time of Alexander of Macedon, Northwest India that by and large later became Pakistan was a part of the Achaemenian (Persian) Empire. Taxila was also the capital of King Ambi, who had made his submissions to Alexander and helped the Macedonian invader against his rival King Porus in 326 BC. Shortly thereafter Alexander died of fever in his eastern stronghold of Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of 33.

Chandragupta Maurya seized power by defeating Alexander's General and Viceroy Seleucus Nikator and established his capital at Pataliputra (modern Patna). The Greek Ambassador Megasthenes, who was there in 306 B.C. has left valuable accounts of the court of Chandargupta and mentions philosophical similarities between Greek and Indian thinkers. The King's chief adviser was Chanakya Kautilya whose advice on the duties and responsibilities of the King and how to rule is found in the famous treatise *Arthasastra* and is much more detailed than Machiavelli's *Prince*. Kautilya says a King should adopt four measures – *sham* (friendly behaviour), *dana* (gifts), *bheda* (divide) and *danda* (punishment) in that order, on opponents and recalcitrants or potential or existing enemies.

Chandragupta's grandson Ashoka the Great sent Buddhist missionaries to China, Korea, Japan as well as Central, South and Southeast Asia. He sent his daughters Charumita to Nepal and his son Mahinda and daughter Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka. The longest living Bodhi Tree in Anuradhapura that was planted by the emperor Ashoka's daughter Sanghamitra still stands there today. Ashoka also established hospitals for the sick, and for animals as well. He planted trees and dug wells and took other measures for the wellbeing of his subjects regardless of race, religion or status. He also built resthouses along the roads that the famous Sher Shah Suri emulated nearly two thousand years later when building the Grand Trunk Road. In the 1970s, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sirimavo Bandaranayake sent Bhutto a present, a sapling of the ancient Bodhi Tree from Anuradhapura. It was planted outside the Taxila Museum.

It was the ancient city of stonecutters founded by Takkhaka (gecko) called Takkhashila, now Taxila, 35 km from Islamabad that Fa Hien described as "a rich and flourishing city, with monks in meditation," in the 4th century BC. It was in this city, in the Buddha's time, that the physician Jivaka had studied medicine. It was in Gandhara extending from Taxila to Peshawar, Swat, Dir, and beyond, that the Bactrian Greek artisans had first fashioned statues of the Buddha, modelled on Apollo during the reign of Kanishka, the third King of the Yueh-Chi (the Kushans) in the 1st Century AD. Before that the Buddha was represented through a tree, a wheel, an umbrella, a lotus or a footprint. The two greatest Buddhist art forms, not counting the Tibetan mandalas called thankas, pertain to the Gandhara and the Mathura Schools. The immense Buddha statues carved on the mountainsides at Bamian in Afghanistan were an example of Buddhist art that remained through the centuries, protected by successive Muslim rulers, until they were tragically blown up by extremists in 2001.

According to legend, one of Emperor Ashoka's wives had developed a soft corner for her stepson Kunala, who, however, rebuffed her advances. Unfortunately, her concocted allegations found credence and it was ordered that Kunala's eyes be taken out. Like his father before he ascended the throne, Kunala too was the Viceroy of Taxila. He did not show any insubordination and submitted to the carrying out of the sentence. Soon after, Ashoka found out about his wife's perfidy. In remorse, he had Kunala's eyes made the object of veneration and built a reliquary stupa that stands even today, two miles from the Taxila museum. Another version of the same legend has it that Kunala's eyes were thrown into a well, and people point to a walled up well today as the repository of Kunala's eyes. Some say Ashoka built the Dharmarajika Stupa, temple and monastery complex before the Kunala episode. Fa Hien, the Chinese monk pilgrim, wrote about the Kunala story. That one day the sightless Kunala played the lute and the king heard the music, recognized his son and took him back, and punished the wicked queen. A Japanese film on the Buddha includes this episode.

Into Gandhara and farther south there followed, among others from Central Asia, the Kushans (Yueh-Chi), the Huns, Genghis Khan, Taimurlane, Ibrahim Lodi, then Babar, descendant of Genghis Khan and Taimur, who founded the Mughal dynasty. And from the south the conqueror of Kabul was the British with the help of Ranjit Singh's forces although they never managed to effectively control Afghanistan. They were not alone; others too have met their nemesis in this barren land of warring tribes. From across the seas came the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch and the English, and only the English managed to rule the subcontinent but that too for less than two hundred years.

Christina Lamb in "Waiting for Allah" writes: "The fort-lined road along the Khyber Pass was built by the British in 1842 after the first of three Afghan Wars as part of their `forward policy' to stop the threat of Russian invasion. At the narrowest point, where the cliff walls almost seem to touch but were actually widened to build the road, it is easy to imagine Surgeon Major William Brydon emerging on a half-

dead horse, the sole survivor of the battle of Gandamak, in the final humiliation of that first war in which 16,500 British soldiers were slaughtered, giving them a lesson it took both them and the Soviets, more than a century later, a long time to learn. From the road one gets tantalizing glimpses of the thirty-four tunnels of the Khyber Railway, along which the Khyber Mail has clung perilously to the knotty cliffside since the railroad was built in the 1920s for the then exorbitant sum of sterling pound 2 million."

Still well preserved, at the Margalla Pass near the monument to General Nicholson on the way to Taxila, there is a stretch of the original Grand Trunk Road built by Sher Shah Sur (also Suri), the Sultan of Delhi from 1540 to 1545. His original name was Farid Khan, son of Miyan Hasan of the Sur clan of Afghans from Peshawar. He built a road from Sonargaon, three miles west of Narayangunj in Bangladesh to Hazro in Attock district. "He had rest houses constructed every four miles for Muslim and Hindu pilgrims, with arrangement for cooked food and dry ration, and horses and riders for carrying royal mail." To be able to control the Gakkhars of the Salt Range, Sher Shah built the Rohtas fort in Jehlum District in 1542. I visited it on 27 February 1974. It is two and a half miles in circumference, has 68 towers and 12 gateways. Some of the walls are 30-40 feet thick.

In May 1535 Sher Shah Suri (also called Sher Khan for having killed a tiger with one stroke of the sword), defeated Mahmud Shah, the King of Bengal and took three lakhs of rupees, with the promise of a farther six lakhs to follow. However, the King of Bengal refused to pay the balance and thereby invited a second invasion in October 1537. When defeated by Sher Shah, the Emperor Nasiruddin Muhammad Humayun fled Delhi and hid in different parts of the subcontinent. He arrived at Umarkot in Sindh on 22 August 1542 and his son Jalaluddin Akbar the Great was born there that year. Humayun spent about a year in Umarkot under the hospitality and protection of the Rajput ruler Rana Parshad, on his way to Persia. In his infancy Akbar was sent to his uncle Kamran who ruled Kabul, and was fourteen years old when his father died. Raja Parshad's descedant Rana Chandar Singh of Tharparkar was elected to the Sindh Provincial Assembly in the 1970 elections, and later to the National Assembly. He held public office under Bhutto, who once mentioned to me that he was, in some measure, repaying Humayun's debt.

In his book called "Sher Shah Suri" Dr. Hussain Khan informs us that at that time the Emperor Nasiruddin Muhammad Humayun, having been defeated by Sher Shah Suri had run away to Persia. Sher Shah sent an emissary, Amir Asam to the Persian King Shah Tahmasp Safavi with the request to hand over the Emperor Humayun, who had taken refuge in his court. The Persian King refused to give up Humayun and cut off Amir Asam's nose and ears. In reprisal Sher Shah gathered 18 "dasta" (groups) of Qazalbash in his domain and had their noses and ears chopped off, and then banished them.

In 1545 Sher Shah was injured when at a trial firing a cannon exploded. Sometime later, when he got the news that the enemy fortress under siege was finally

captured, he was relieved and died peacefully on 23 May 1545. The remarkable Sher Shah Suri ruled for only five years but his many contributions bear testimony to his achievements even today. Amongst his many legacies there is the building in Delhi wherein his adversary Emperor Humayun fell down the stairs and as a consequence died in January 1556.

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Raja Tridiv Roy (Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs & Tourism): On a tour of interior Sindh, where he was presented *Ajrak* and Sindhi cap.

CHAPTER V

Bhutto's Birthday at Larkana and other tours

President Z.A.Bhutto decided to celebrate his birthday, 5 January, 1973 with a big party at his ancestral home in Larkana. He invited the Cabinet and all the foreign Ambassadors stationed in Islamabad to his estate in Larkana, Sindh, and arranged a special train from Rawalpindi for them. The participants to a duckshoot, in which category I had been pre-selected without consultation, were allocated different spots in the marshes, with appropriate blinds already put up where necessary. I acquiesced, thinking it would lack grace to make a fuss. Like the others I also bagged some ducks.

In the evening on 8 January 1973, Martine and I along with other guests had dinner at the President's ancestral house "Al-Murtaza", and watched a film called "Night Watches". The following day we visited the ruins of Moenjodaro and then along with Admiral and Parveen Rashid Ahmad and Sadia, wife of Abdul Hafeez Pirzada returned to Islamabad via Multan in the Amoco oil company plane, an Otter, through the courtesy of Admiral Rashid Ahmad.

He had been summarily dismissed by ZAB and now worked for Amoco Oil Company. The Rashids had been invited to Larkana, ostensibly to demonstrate that there were no hard feelings. As soon as he took over power in December 1971, ZAB had announced over the radio the dismissal of about six top army generals including Yahya's Army Chief General Hamid and two admirals including the No. 2 in the Navy, Rear Admiral Rashid Ahmad. Therefore, when he received the invitation to Larkana, which was mainly for foreign diplomats stationed in Islamabad, Rashid told me many years later, that he had thought there had been a mistake and told the military secretary Brigadier Imtiaz that perhaps there was a mistake and Admiral H.H. Ahmed of the Navy was the person invited.

Brigadier Imtiaz again checked with ZAB and confirmed that the existing naval officer Admiral H.H. Ahmed had been put down in the guest list for a function a few weeks later and Rashid Ahmad, the former naval officer was indeed the invitee to Larkana. The reason for ZAB's animus against Rashid was said to be because while Rashid had accompanied him as the navy's No. 2 to a foreign country in 1971, Rashid had not been found sufficiently hawkish as his counterparts General Gul Hasan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan, the same two who shortly thereafter helped ZAB take over power from Yahya Khan. They were the same two whom ZAB had dramatically removed from office, escorted to Lahore under PPP stalwarts and later sent off as Ambassadors to Austria and Spain. Without any explanation Bhutto had also stopped Admiral Rashid's pension, which he had earned through an unblemished and meritorious record of service in the Navy. About ten years later, President Zia restored his pension.

The young and dynamic PPP Pakhtun leader Hayat Mohammad Khan Sherpao was appointed Governor of the Frontier Province in December 1971, the youngest Governor on record. Thereafter he was taken into the Federal Cabinet as Minister for Fuel Power and Natural Resources, and later he was made Chief Minister of NWFP. (On 8 December 1975 while he was attending a function at the Peshawar University a bomb explosion killed him). Sherpao had lent me his Cessna, which could carry four passengers. The three other passengers were Martine, the leading tour operator in the region Sadruddin Walji and his wife Shireen. On 14 May 1973, my 40th birthday, the four of us took off on a tour of Chitral. The pilot was a brother of one of my friends, Bashir, who used to be in Mackinnon Mackenzie in Chittagong and now lived in Karachi. The gentleman informed me that it was also his birthday today.

After we had flown past Tarbela Dam the pilot quietly told us that he was flying on this route after 17 years and was not quite sure exactly where the Lowari Pass over which we had to fly in order to arrive at the Chitral valley was located. He made a few more tentative forays here and there, then candidly admitted that he could not find the Lowari Pass amid the mountains. In that case, I suggested, we might return and land at Tarbela Dam. With his Taurean sangfroid he intimated that this would be difficult; we did not have enough fuel left in the tank. He brightened up after another false attempt and said we might try to get to Afghanistan but, of course, we would likely be shot at. The condition of the four passengers can be imagined. However, no one had demonstrated any panic so far although none of us was brimful of happiness either. Sadruddin suddenly pointed at one of the peaks and said, "Let's try there". We did. It turned out to be the Lowari Pass and we saw the valley of Chitral below us. No valley ever looked greener.

The three valleys of Rambhur, Birir and Bamboret, high up in the Hindu Kush mountains on the border of Afghanistan are known as Kafiristan, peopled by the Kalash or Kafir Kalash who are said to be the descendants of Alexander's soldiers. Others believe them to be groups of Aryan tribes that settled in these remote valleys in their wanderings. A Pakistani academic told the Greek Ambassador and me in October 2002 that genetic tests showed they were of Italian and German racial origin. In some of their own legends and folklore there is mention that they came from Tsyam, (which some consider to be located to the south of present-day Nuristan) which is another name for Syria. They have their own religion and ancient Aryan gods like Indra also finds a place therein. Their distinctive headgear is embedded with cowrie shells. As this was money in former days it would denote a sensible manner of safeguarding one's wealth, as well as demonstrating it perhaps. They are a goodlooking people, with their own dress, language and culture. One particular feature of their houses, one storeyed or two, is that there is neither window nor chimney, (only sometimes a hole in the roof) so the smoke from the hearth fire has hardly any outlet. Maybe it is one of the reasons for eye problems that many suffer from, especially the girls and women who presumably spend more time indoors. They have special festivals like *Chilamjust* and *Chomus*. Women do not visit

their temples whilst the *Bashalini*, the isolation house for women during their periods and when they deliver babies can not be visited by men.

On 16 May we went from Chitral town to Kafiristan and on the 18th by foot and by horse from Birir to Bamboret crossing a ridge over 9000 feet separating the two valleys. The visit to the Kafir Kalash was invigorating and educative. I decided the government must continue to take further measures to help them improve their lot. My Ministry undertook certain measures for their welfare and the Federal Government as well as most of the officers of the Provincial Government have been helpful. But much more needs to be done for them. Government has to be watchful in providing them adequate protection and encouragement so that they can live according to their own culture and values. It is hoped that the depredations into their culture will dwindle and cease, and they will be able to flourish as a people, preserving their way of life and values, at the same time deriving the advantage of education and health facilities that are in short supply.

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Having been invited to visit Lebanon by the Lebanese Minister of Tourism, Surein Khanamerian, I left Karachi on 3 July 1973. At Beirut airport the Tourism Minister and our Ambassador Dr. S.M. Koreshi received me. The United Bank representative Vilayat Hussain Abidi invited the Ambassador and me for dinner that evening and to see the floor show at the Venus Club. On 4 July the Ambassador and I called on the Tourism Minister and then proceeded to visit the famous ruins at Baalbeck. In the evening the Ambassador gave a dinner for 65 guests including the Prime Minister and Khanamerian. After the dinner we were invited to the Crazy Horse nightclub to see their well-known show.

The Grand Mufti had died the day before so on the morning of the 5th Ambassador Koreshi and I went to sign the condolence book at his house. At 11:00 am I held a press conference. Mehboob Ali Khan of Habib Bank invited some of us to lunch after which our guide took us for a swim in the Mediterranean. At 6:00 pm had a meeting with the tour operators. I had the opportunity of visiting the Palestine refugee quarters in the city. While there we got a fortuneteller to read my future from a cup of olive oil.

I was shown around the tourist sites and a Druze politician invited us out of town to his home in the mountains some way off. The Lebanese, descendants of the intrepid traders and seafarers earlier called the Phoenicians, have made Beirut not only a great tourist attraction but a haven for banking and commerce. (It is tragic that shortly after this visit vested interests conspired to immerse the region in conflict and violence.) After three hectic days the Minister and our Ambassador saw me off at the airport at 8:00 am on 6 July 1973.

After a 40 minute ALIA flight I landed in Amman, Jordan. I was received by the Minister of Tourism and antiquities of Jordan, Ghalib Barakat as well as our

Ambassador Masud and others. The Chairman of ALIA hosted us at a lunch. After a visit to the Roman ruins with the Minister I watched the World Cup Football final match on TV at the Ambassador's house. West Germany defeated Holland 2-1. On the morning of the 7th attended a meeting with the Minister and his advisers, then with Minister Barakat visited the world heritage site at Petra. The Romans had conquered it in the second century AD. There are temples, tombs, shrines and a great theatre carved out of red sandstone cliffs. The Third Secretary of our Embassy also joined us. In the evening, with the Ambassador, I attended a banquet given by King Hussein for the visiting Ruler of Qatar. The King and Prince Hassan recalled our meeting and a cruise on the Kaptai Lake years ago. On 9 July 1973 at 9:30 am, I held a press conference before leaving for Madrid. Minister Barakat and our military advisers to Jordan came to the airport to see me off.

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My trip to Spain in July 1973 was undertaken at the invitation of the Spanish government with a view to seeing at first hand how tourism was managed in a country that received more tourists every year than their entire population. After a 7-hour flight, with a 40-minute stopover at Athens, I arrived at Madrid airport. The Spanish Minister of Information and Tourism and our Ambassador Air Marshal Rahim Khan received me at the airport. TV and press were there and I held an impromptu press conference. Later, I called on the Minister, then after dinner we were invited to "The Witches" to see Flamenco and other Andalusian dances.

On 10 July in the morning I held a meeting with Spanish tourism officials and hoteliers. At 1:00 pm I signed the Agreement on Technical and Scientific Cooperation at the Foreign Ministry on behalf of Pakistan, while the Spanish Foreign Minister Pedro Cortina Mauri signed for Spain. The Director of the Institute of Hispanic Culture Juan Ignacio Tena Ybarra invited us to dinner at a restaurant. We were introduced to Lucero Tena, the best castanet player who was also a good dancer. She had performed in India at the invitation of the Government and she wanted us to invite her to Pakistan where she wished to perform. At most of the functions I attended I was accompanied by our Ambassador in Madrid, Air Marshal Rahim Khan, who was pleasant and punctilious, and, as was to be expected, efficient.

In a novel and pragmatic approach Spain had converted some of the old and unused fortresses as resthouses for tourists and called them Paradores (halting places).

On 11 July I visited the Prado museum in the company of the Chief of Protocol, then called on Prince Juan Carlos. His grandfather had been the last King of Spain. Franco had belatedly joined the civil war that started on 17 July 1917 as a rebellion against the popular front government when the first great battle was fought in Toledo. Toward the end of his rule, in 1969, Generalissimo Franco had proclaimed that on his death Prince Juan Carlos would become the King of Spain, so in a manner of speaking the latter was waiting in the wings. He did not have long to wait because

at the time of my visit Franco was ill, and died in 1975. The Prince, who was affable and down to earth, was very happy with the onyx chess set that I had brought him from Pakistan. I was presented to King Juan Carlos a couple of times more in Buenos Aires when he visited Argentina some ten years and more later.

The Alhambra Palace and fortress and the gardens and mosques at Granada, the most famous landmark of 800 years of Moorish rule, is not only beautiful but historic. The decorations of the interior are ascribed to Sultan Yusuf-I, who died in 1354. When the Sultan lost Granada to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on 1 January 1492, he wept in anger and sorrow. It is said that his mother castigated him instead of consoling him. She said, "You are crying like a woman for what you could not defend like a man." It was less the bleeding heart of a mother and more the regal heart of a Queen that spoke the bitter words. King Ferdinand set up the inquisition and in the joint reign with Isabella the Jews were expelled from Spain. However, the Queen was responsible for making it possible for Columbus to discover the west. Ferdinand and Isabella were entombed in the chapel of Capilla Real. (In Spanish Real means Royal).

After visiting various other places I flew to the popular island resort of San Juan, Mallorca. I stayed there a day or two at Son Vida Hotel and held a press conference too. On 15 July, after a couple of days at the Costa del Sol, I left Malaga and was received at the Nonacem airport in Casablanca with a guard of honour. The Consul General of Pakistan was there with others. On the 16th, Honorary Consul of Pakistan hosted a lunch at a local club. Afterward I left for the capital, Rabat.

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New Zealand meant kiwis and sheep. And being in the Antipodes meant people walked on their heads or they would fall off the earth. These were the images I had stored in my childhood mind. Now, in the middle of November 1973, Bhutto asked me to lead the Pakistan delegation to the 23rd annual ministerial meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee at Wellington, New Zealand next month.

The Cook's Hotel in Wellington was on top of a cliff and looked down on the sea, on lots of little boats and yachts snugly basking in the morning sun. It was comfortable enough but a little different in that the entrance was on the ground level but instead of going up to various floors one went down to the bedrooms and to the dining room. The deputy leader of our delegation was the Secretary of the Economic Affairs division, Aftab Ahmed Khan, a larger–than–life civil servant with many years' experience who knew the ins and outs and then some, of our finance and economy. A secretary in Asia is the head of the bureaucrats, the equivalent of the Permanent Secretary or Under Secretary in the US or Britain. While I provided the political weight to the delegation, he provided the expertise.

Seasons being topsy–turvy here, it was now summer in December. At about eight one evening, a few of us went out to a restaurant for dinner. For most of us it

was a mark of concession to western mores, as we generally did not dine before 9 pm, and often even later. However, the waiters were preparing to go home and we were informed that the restaurant was closed. We were more than an hour late. Most people dined between 5 and 6 pm. The question was perhaps more that of rural and urban, rather than east and west, because even in rural Asia the last meal is usually around sundown. In another southern hemisphere city, Buenos Aires, if anyone wanted dinner at 7 pm he would be considered sick or a freak.

Wellington was a clean city with a salubrious climate and did not quite give one the feel of a "city", which usually meant being crowded with too many buildings and people, and cars liberally emitting noxious fumes. Wellington was obviously not in the same league as New York or Buenos Aires where nightlife was concerned either, perhaps happily so, so good luck and continued good health to Wellingtonians. Our hosts had arranged for us to see a bit of rural life, with a demonstration of sheep shearing as well. Before our admiring eyes, the sheep was shorn of his wool rapidly and dextrously and as soon as it was freed it trotted off like a child happily released after a haircut.

On my way back I stopped off at Sydney. Our Ambassador Mufti Abbas was kind enough to show me around the harbour, the city and the newly constructed cantilevered Opera House of an unusual design that reminded me of onions and linked sea shells. One bit of information I gleaned stuck in my memory: then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam had recently paid a million dollars for a painting. It was from public funds and for a public institution. Some people considered the expenditure extravagant while others thought it was justified as it encouraged local talent. Nowadays one reads of paintings being sold for fifty times or more. If only their creators could sniff even a fraction of that money, many of them would not have starved, or drank themselves sick, or lived in debilitating penury. In today's world millions die for want of food and medicine. Yet an individual can earn millions of dollars for kicking a ball around for a little while or punching someone and being punched for sometime in a ring, or acting in a movie – these being only a few examples. Equity, balance and sobriety may prevail among mankind some day, hopefully.

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On 31 December 1973, at Government House, Karachi, we sat down to a special cabinet meeting that lasted for nine hours, with just a break for lunch. After the Governor's formal dinner for the Prime Minister we dispersed near 11:00 pm. With effect from 1 January 1974, shipping and banking stood nationalized in Pakistan. The process had begun on 1 January 1972 when government had assumed management and control of 31 industrial units.

On 15 January 1974, I attended a meeting of the Bhil Panchayat at Ismail Goth, Clifton, Karachi. The President is Ranchor Patel. The Bhils, and other minority groups like the Kohls and Mundas are mainly in Sind and some in the Punjab, with a smattering elsewhere. These are some of the original inhabitants (First Peoples) of

the subcontinent, predating the Aryans by millennia. The Bhils and Meghwars and Balmikis in Pakistan belong to the Hindu Scheduled Castes and as a minority community formed part of my charge.

In the afternoon I presided over a Board meeting of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) where the Managing Director Ardeshir Cowasjee had a tiff with Air Marshal Nur Khan, then Chairman PIA. I had to intervene and smooth things over. Nur Khan had succeeded Air Marshal Asghar Khan as Chief of the Air Force on 3 July 1965. He was Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Chief before that from 1959 to 1965, Governor of West Pakistan from August 1969 to January 1970, (then again Chairman PIA from 1973 to 1978), in between he was Federal Minister and Deputy Martial Law Administrator looking after half a dozen portfolios. The national airlines that he ran efficiently, has never again quite acquired its prestige or its financial viability since he left.

Ardeshir Cowasjee's father was a wealthy Parsi shipowner. The son is somewhat a prickly character with an acerbic wit, who in the pre-Ayub era, for a period whiled away his time in the cafes on Via Venito in the company of another educated unemployed, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. While they set about arranging the world and projected themselves into the future, it is believed that ZAB promised to make Ardeshir an Ambassador when he became numero uno in Pakistan. One day, ZAB had rung me up and suggested the appointment of Ardeshir as Managing Director of PTDC. He spoke of Ardeshir's dynamism, imagination and organizational abilities. Subsequently Ardeshir earned fame as a newspaper columnist for his pungent humour, and for his championing of civic causes, especially of Karachi, and of democratic values and justice. From certain angles Ardeshir resembles Omar Sharif (Dr. Zivago's) rival, with beard et al.

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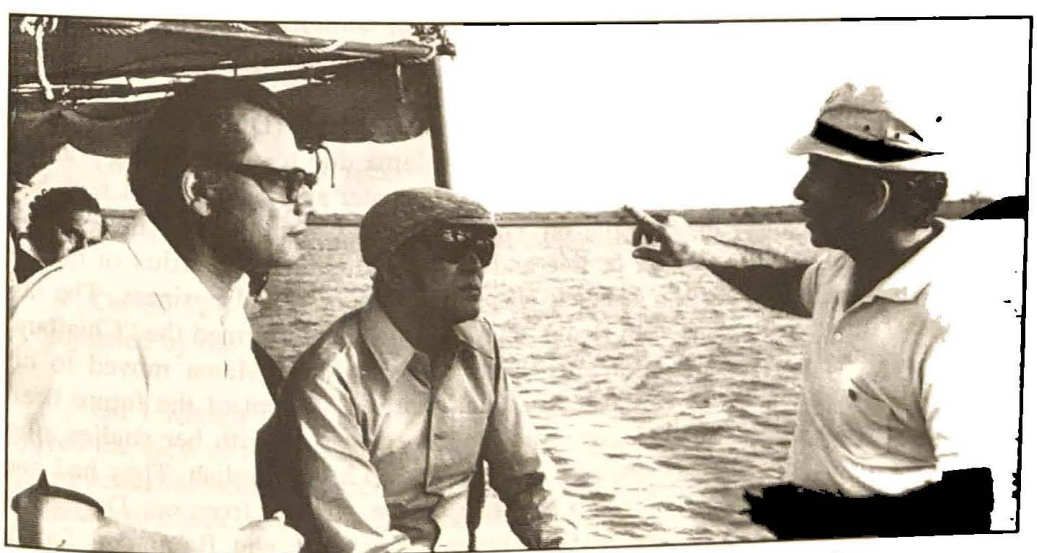

Raja Tridiv Roy: A Cruise at Phitti Creek, off Karachi (Site for future Port Qasim, with Mr. Inayatullah, Secretary, Ministry of Minorities Affairs (left) and Commodore Anwer Saeed, Chairman KPT, later Ambassador to North Korea and Oman (right)

CHAPTER VI

Bangladesh Recognition

On 19 January 1974, I had dinner at the residence of Aslam Azhar, the Cambridge educated head of Pakistan Television. An expert photographer Nisar Mirza showed some slides of tourist spots in the Northern Areas. I had a stimulating chat with Pakistan's renowned poet, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, who had written the foreword to one of my two books of short stories called "They Simply Belong". After the dinner I attended the dinner dance party of Arshad Sami and Naureen. Arshad was now the Deputy Chief of Protocol. He had served President Ayub, Yahya and Bhutto as A.D.C., earlier. He subsequently became Chief of Protocol after which he went to Sweden as our Ambassador.

I shifted to 248 B Margalla Road, a villa with a view of the mountains and a spacious lawn opposite the Saidpur Road. The Mir of Hunza was my next-door neighbour. On 21 January I returned the Mir's earlier call on me. He is a dignified gentleman of the old school, whom I had met in Hunza twice and availed of his hospitality, along with a demonstration of traditional dances. The Hunzakuts, some think, are the lost tribe of Israel. They are the followers of the Agha Khan and are known as Ismailis. His eldest son Prince Ghazanfar, with some others, joined the Foreign Office recently as a 'lateral entrant'. By and large, the regular Foreign Service officers are not too pleased to have to share their perks and their privileges with the new lot, which meant a smaller share of the pie. However, Bhutto had worked out a formula, capping the non-Foreign Service Ambassadorial appointments at 40%, for which there had hithero been no specified ceiling. The induction at other levels was not under a limit but was nevertheless selective and restrained.

I received a letter from my eldest sister Amiti (Didi) from Farnham informing me of the death in Calcutta of Sunit Mama due to pleurisy. He was my mother's older brother. In 1942 and early 1943 my sister and I had stayed with him and Dadu (Grandfather) in their flat on Theatre Road, Calcutta for a few months. That was the time of the Bengal famine and we had witnessed the influx of hungry people into the city by the thousand. It was a tragic sight, a sad business. The last disastrous famine had occurred in Bengal in 1770, in Bengali termed the "Chiattarer Mannantar." A year or two later after Dadu's death, Sunit Mama moved to his mother (Didima's) house at Gariahat Road and married an aunt of the future heart throb of Bengali films. Suchitra Sen. Aunt Sabita carried on with her studies after marriage and got a Master's degree in Bengali as well as in English. They had one chubby son, Kabir, whom Didi and I loved to cuddle. To and from our Darjeeling schools, Didi and I would stop at their home every year, and Baramami Sabita (Sunit's wife) was always very caring and kindly. Sunit was a man of few words but fondly avuncular. He had lately taken to smoking the hubble bubble occasionally at home and had become a home body, only regularly going to the cinema and watching

an English movie at weekends, which Sabita preferred to let him enjoy alone as she would rather, though rarely, see Bengali movies.

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We wanted to build new hotels in the Northern Areas of Pakistan for tourists. In this respect I had consultations with the Japanese architect Kunio Hashimoto and other tourism officials and discussed designs with them. To promote tourism I had arranged reciprocally with a number of countries visa free entry into Pakistan for tourists for a month. However, for security reasons the Interior Ministry banned entry of tourists without a valid visa into Pakistan from 20 January to 28 February 1974 on account of the Islamic Summit Conference to be held in Lahore.

On 7 February, Hayat Mohammad Khan Sherpao, the Minister for Fuel, Power and Natural Resources gave a dinner at his home. President Chaudhry Fazal Elahi, PM and Mrs. Bhutto, J.A.Rahim, Mrs. Pirzada, Mubashir Hasan, Yousuf Buch and I attended. Later Abdul Hafeez Pirzada joined us. We discussed Bangladesh recognition in anticipation of 23 February when the Prime Minister was to receive Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Lahore for the Islamic Summit. Bhutto had been holding meetings with different segments of society to prepare them for Bangladesh recognition.

On 22 February Prime Minister Bhutto held a meeting of Pakistan People's Party MNAs and MPAs and announced recognition of Bangladesh. Early 23 February I left Lahore for Islamabad. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reached Lahore later in the day to attend the Islamic Summit.

Later in February I had to receive some dignitaries from abroad in connection with the Islamic Summit Conference. On 16 February I received Sarrim Chaak, Foreign Minister of Cambodia, who was coming from Peking.

On 26 February I received Colonel Qaddafi at the Chaklala airport that served the twin cities, and attended a banquet for him at the State Guest House in Rawalpindi the same evening.

On 27 February, with a group I paid a visit to the celebrated Rohtas Fort accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner who received us at Dina.

On 1 March I accompanied foreign journalists on a safari in a Boeing and enjoyed the view of the sweep of the Karakoram massif with a number of the world's highest peaks including the second tallest, the K2. The air safari was impressive, and was meant to publicize our tourism potentials in the north of the country.

On 2 March I received the President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda.

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CHAPTER VII

March-October 1974

On 6 March 1974 our Ambassador to East Germany Jamsheed Marker as well as the International Tourist Board Representatives received me at Berlin airport. There was a lunch given by the ITB at the Fair and a reception at the Berlin Hotel in the evening for 2000 guests. To enter East Berlin the next day we had to stop and show our papers at the historic barrier known as "Checkpoint Charlie". I was driven around the historic sites of East Berlin and I took some movie films. Left at 6:30 pm by air and reached Frankfurt at 7:30 pm. Ambassador to West Germany, Sajjad Hyder received me at the airport. He was also staying at the Intercontinental Hotel, and we went to see some shows in town.

Ambassador Sajjad Hyder told me he had given prior intimation to President Yahya Khan and Foreign Secretary Sultan Khan of India's intention to invade East Pakistan in 1971. But, he said, they had paid no heed. He was then our High Commissioner in Delhi. I left Frankfurt for London where Embassy First Secretary and Arbab Sahib of Tourism received me. I stayed at Carlton Tower Hotel. I attended a PIA meeting of tour operators. The number of foreign tourist visits to Pakistan was picking up and if all went well, in another two or three years tourism should be a thriving employment generator and foreign exchange earner.

On 10 March 1974, at 11.00 pm I left Heathrow airport, and arrived at Caracas airport at 7:00 am, local time on the 11th. Our Ambassador to the US is concurrently accredited to Venezuela so Iqbal Riza, Charge d'Affaires of our Washington Embassy received me at the airport with Senor Valesco Mantikia. At 9:00 am I presented a copy of my credentials to the Foreign Minister at the Casa Amarillo (Yellow House); and at 6:00 pm presented credentials to the outgoing President Dr. Rafael Caldera at Miraflores Palace. After that I had a chat with Pat Nixon who was representing President Nixon at the inauguration ceremonies.

On 12 March, at 10:30 am I attended the inauguration of the new President of Venezuela. Population of the country is 12 million and of Caracas 2 million, with an army of about 60,000 troops.

On 13 March, at 9:00 am, along with other Special Envoys, I felicitated President Carlos Andres Perez at Parliament House. He and his new Cabinet were all dressed formally in coat and tails. There was a military parade that started at 12:00 noon, one hour late. At 8:00 in the evening, I attended the reception at the President's Palace.

On 14 March, at 1:00 am I left for Brasilia. Aziz Ahmad Khan, Third Secretary and Charge d'Affaires of our Embassy and Counsellor Pedro E

Penver de Cunha received me at the airport. At 4:30 pm, I presented credentials to the outgoing President, General Emilio Garrastazu Medici. With Aziz, his wife and the Deputy Chief of UNDP and his wife, we had dinner at a lakeside restaurant.

On 15 March, at 10 am, I attended the swearing in ceremony of General Ernesto Geisel as President and General Adalberto Pereila dos Santos as Vice-President at Palacio Congreso. The handing over speech was short at 10 minutes, unlike at Caracas, where the new President had spoken for one and a half hours. At 10 pm, there was a reception for over 2,000 guests. The colossal buildings, mainly of glass and steel frames, were somewhat surreal, like Hollywood sets. Met Senora de Seta and also her friend whose husband had been kidnapped by the Tupamaro (named after the Peruvian rebel Tupac Amaru) in Uruguay. She was not one to wring her hands and moan. She raised the required funds for the ransom and rescued her husband.

On 17 March, after flying for nine and a half hours on Panam arrived at Kennedy Airport at 9:40 pm, one hour late due to a headwind. Ambassador Iqbal Akhund, Consul General Najmus Saqib Khan and others were at the airport. Also met Ardeshir Zahedi, Iran's Foreign Minister. I am putting up at the Plaza Hotel, suite 1609. With an old friend went to see a ballet and then had dinner at a Czechoslovak restaurant. The following day, with Rafat Mehdi from our UN Mission, went shopping, then to the Nikon Headquarters out of town to repair my camera. Went to see the "Exorcist" with an Iranian friend from an aristocratic family of Turkish origin called Gashgai on the borders of Iran who lives in New York. My sister Rakhi telephoned she would be coming and arrived the next day.

Saqib Sahib invited me to one of his Gourmet Club's periodic dinners at the Waldorf Astoria. After a sip of one of the many wines they offered, an expert – and they were all experts on one thing or another relating to food and drink – launched an introductory comment on the wine that lasted about thirty minutes. One or two expatiated on the finer points of body or bouquet while I wondered if I would ever get out of this interminable maze of verbiage, reminiscent of heavy parliamentary sittings. However, there was more yet to come. Volumes were spoken on one of the bird dishes, could have been partridge or quail, and more erudite discussions followed as we savoured meat dishes. Then followed discourses on the esoteric doctrines and dogmas of cheeses. By the time the "meal" was over I was not sure whether I was on the outward bound or was returning to Pakistan.

A family friend rang up to inform me of her forthcoming marriage. I wished her happiness. I had dinner with Rakhi at Charlie Coudert's place. He and his wife Robbie were as charming as ever. They had served in Dhaka in the late 1960s and at one time we had planned to go on a Mediterranean cruise, about eight of us. Charlie was going to borrow his brother's yacht. Unfortunately, the horrors of 1971 erupted and hopes of seeing the sunset at

the Grotto at Capri or Napoleon's birthplace at Corsica or Socrates' haunts or the Acropolis at Athens, vanished like a will-o-the-wisp.

Now, after exchanging happy reminiscences I dropped Rakhi at my friend's place, where she was staying. The next day, at 3:45 pm I met travel trade ASTA executives. In the evening there was a reception at Pakistan House for travel writers, about 33 or so attended.

On 21 March, our Consul General arranged a meeting with the travel writers, some of whom were at the reception yesterday. Lunched at the Panam Restaurant on top of the building. Our Consul General was the host. Paul Sheeline, the President of Panam, and another man as well as Yousaf Haroon attended. Ambassador Akhund and others saw me off at the Kennedy airport. After a few days in London reached Islamabad via Amsterdam at noon, on 24 March 1974.

On 4 April, UN Journalist Ted Morello came to call. He was a guest of our Tourism Ministry. Hosted a lunch for him at the Intercontinental.

At Karachi, a few days later, Executive Vice President of Hotel Intercontinental whom I had recently met at a lunch in New York, Hans Sternik explained some of his problems. Secretary Roedad Khan was also present. On return to Islamabad his problems were sorted out and he was profusely thankful.

On 11 April, I visited Khinjer Lake (old name Kalri) in the Pakistan Tours' new Toyota coach. The Deputy Commissioner of Thatta and Irrigation Department officers were present and explained some of the salient features of plans to preserve bird life and offer facilities to tourists. Pakistan has 188 species of mammals, 666 of birds and 166 of reptiles. The expression "Swallows fly south" applies to Pakistan because particularly the rare white cranes fly thousands of miles from Siberia to these warmer regions every year.

On 13 April, I attended the Sikh community Baisakhi festival. They also come for the birthday of their founder, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) at Punja Sahib at Hassanabdal near Taxila, 48 km from Islamabad. The Sikhs come to Pakistan two or three times on pilgrimage from India as well as from Africa, Europe and North America every year.

On 20 April, I received General Ne Win of Burma as Minister-in-waiting. In a helicopter I accompanied him to Tarbela and Taxila. In the evening the Prime Minister gave a banquet for him. On 21 April 1974, with General and Mrs. Ne Win I went to call on Prime Minister and Mrs. Bhutto, then attended official talks. In the evening there was Ne Win's return banquet for Prime Minister Bhutto. On 23 April, with General Ne Win to visit Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque, and Lahore Museum, where Rudyard Kipling's father John Lockwood Kipling had been the Curator. Rudyard was born in Bombay on 30 December 1865. His parents took him to England at the age of six and he spent a tough five years at a foster home, then

attended Westward Ho in Devon. He returned to India in 1882 and spent seven years as a journalist. In 1907 he received the Nobel Prize for literature. The original Fasting Buddha statue depicting Prince Siddhartha practising extreme austerities before becoming the Buddha is housed at the Lahore Museum. The Ne Wins left at 3:00 pm and I returned to Islamabad in the Governor's special plane.

Of all the heads of state and dignitaries including Kurt Waldheim that I escorted on their tours in Pakistan, the most lively and down to earth was Norodom Sihanouk who started off as prince (at birth) then became King, then Prince and then again King. He was also unusually versatile not only in his political and diplomatic life, but also as producer-director-actor in his own films. He told me that the communists were not harsh to him and at one time when his movements had been restricted, they used to send him his meals every day. When I enquired if he had liked the food, he said that actually they were quite nice and knew of his favourite dishes and used to provide them by rotation. The only problem he said was that they expected everybody to be like a Buddha and unfortunately most people including himself were far from being endowed with Buddha-like qualities, or virtues, upto that level. Although China is a socialist country, she had provided shelter and succour to the King through thick and thin, and even today it is to Beijing that he goes regularly for his treatment.

In the afternoon on 23 April, Field Marshal Ayub Khan died of a heart attack at his residence in Islamabad. Whatever his faults he improved the economic condition of Pakistan, introduced many important reforms, and enhanced Pakistan's stature in the community of nations.

The National Assembly on 23 April approved the recognition of erstwhile East Pakistan as Bangladesh. In the evening Prime Minister Bhutto telephoned me to talk of the matter and to confirm that my seat in the National Assembly remained intact.

On 27 April, I left for Tehran at 1:00 am, with Justice Feroze Nana, a renowned Sindhi intellectual, our Managing Director of PTDC Syed Akhtar Mahmood, Joint Secretary Imran Shah and Muniruddin, able officers of the Ministry. We were on a four-day official visit at the invitation of the Government of Iran. Our first trip out of the capital was to the tent city that the Shah had erected at Persepolis to commemorate 2000 years of Iranian monarchy. The narrator of the sound and light show at Persepolis was an eminent English actor (either Orson Wells or Laurence Olivier) and did his job well. His rendition was impressive and vividly brought to mind past glories, tragedies and triumphs, of Persian potentates and Alexander who sacked the city as a mark of revenge. We visited many gardens and shrines, cities and centres of excellence associated with ancient poets and kings, and artisans in different parts of the country. Iran is the home of Omar Khayam, Shirazi, Firdousi and Avicenna, an ancient land of poetry, art and culture, and we were privileged to see and savour some of its soothing beauty and dazzling splendour.

The Shah received me at one of his palaces and when I reminded him of Chittagong he said: "You must have been very young then." Actually I was not quite

17 then. The Shah looked a little careworn. Maybe he inwardly felt some negative vibrations. Shortly thereafter Ayatullah Khomenei returned from exile in France and deposed the Shah. True to the adage about adversity trying friends, in his troubles when he was ill and powerless in exile very very few of his old friends showed him any friendship or sympathy. However, hats off to Anwar Saadat of Egypt. He gave him refuge and let him die with some semblance of dignity.

On 4 May, at 4:30 pm, I inaugurated a Meena Bazar, (fete) at the imposing Christchurch, in Rawalpindi. In the evening there was a dinner by the Ambassador of the Philippines.

On 9 May, at Karachi, attended Vesak (Buddha Purnima) function as guest speaker at the Theosophical Society. The Society is headed by Mrs. Gool Minwalla, a philanthropist and educationist of Karachi, from one of the old Parsi families of the area. The Parsis are Zoroastrians originating from Iran (ancient Persia). They believe in Ahura Mazda and they are to be found mainly in and around Bombay, and a smaller number in Karachi. The essence of their tenet is "Good thought, good speech and good action." Nowadays, however, they have been dispersed and many live in Europe and North America. The function started with some young ladies chanting the Trisaranena – the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

On 11 May, I saw off Prime Minister Bhutto, who left for Peking. I had dinner at the Spanish Ambassador Marcelo's residence. His Australian wife Holly was fond of cracking jokes, of various genre and shade. Marcelo's son by his former wife married Nilofar, Laila's daughter by a former husband. Some years later they were blessed with a daughter. After Islamabad Marcelo and Holly were posted to Rotterdam.

On 20 May, I attended National Economic Council Meeting at Governor's House, Lahore, and on 23 May, hosted a dinner at Hotel Intercontinental for the Chinese tourism delegation. On 28 May, had a luncheon meeting with miniorities in Karachi and discussed their problems.

On 1 June there were Anti-Qadiani demonstrations. Violence broke out in parts of the Punjab. On 3 June, Prime Minister spoke about the anti-Qadiani trouble in the National Assembly. The Qadianis or Ahmadis are a sect of Muslims that mainly inhabit the Punjab province of Pakistan. Their creed enjoins on the followers a belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet of Islam. The orthodox Muslims, Sunnis as well as Shias believe that the last prophet of Islam (PBUH) was Muhammad who was the Messenger of God and the Founder of Islam. They believe that there cannot be any other Prophet after him. Therefore, those that believe and proclaim that any individual born after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a Prophet of Islam cannot be considered to be Muslim.

On 22 June, I presided over a meeting of the Board of Directors of PTDC in Karachi and later inaugurated "The Hut", a discotheque. On 24 June inaugurated a meeting of UNDP experts here on a visit to Pakistan.

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As I was to lead the Pakistan delegation to the Law of the Sea Conference in Caracas, Venezuela, the Legal Adviser in the Foreign Ministry called on me on 28 June 1974 with the brief on the subject. I arrived at the Venezuelan capital on 1 July 1974. Justice Cheema and Ambassador Kharas received me at the airport. At 10 am the next morning we had a meeting of our delegation at my hotel suite, after which I took the delegation to lunch. Justice Cheema, who had been ably leading the delegation since its beginning on 20 June, left for New York and Pakistan in the afternoon, as scheduled.

The deputy leader Ambassador Kharas, whose nickname was Jumbo (belieing his small stature), was a member of the tiny but economically and educationally advanced Parsi community. Originally he belonged to the prestigious Indian Civil Service. He told me that in his younger days when he had been a magistrate and tried a case, other things being equal, if he was not sure he convicted the defendant if he did not like his face. In Caracas, Kharas was accompanied by his charming and gentle wife and his young daughter Parveen, who had recently finished her studies and had obtained good grades. Their son Homi was a college student in the States and dropped in on a visit. He was an adventurous lad and went off on a bus tour via Mexico. Another member of our delegation was Mian Qadruddin from the Foreign Office, who later joined one of the organs of the United Nations.

In the evenings at the hotel in midtown Caracas, there was the incessant chorus of cicadas. It became a sort of background music one got accustomed to. The other auditory sensation, or assault, was the groaning and moaning in real or feigned ecstasy, next door. It occurred at a certain time in the evening on weekends. I made enquiries. I was told that an influential doctor had rented the room, and no one wished to divulge his name. If I did not wish to benefit from this routine and gratuitous titillation I would make it a point not to be in my room at the ordained hour. In any case most evenings we were busy attending numerous diplomatic receptions but once in a while I had to submit to this invasion of my privacy.

On 17 August with Ambassador Kharas and his family and Samad, a Pakistani scientist, went to visit the latter's new house and met his wife. On the way we had lunch at an Old Spanish type restaurant and then visited the historic site where the last decisive battle between the Freedom Fighters and Colonial Spain had taken place in 1821. A few days later, Ambassador Akhund, our Permanent Representative at the UN in New York confirmed on elephone that the Prime Minister had asked me to go on to Mexico, Argentina, Peru and Brazil as a Special Envoy. The letters to Presidents on Pakistan's other U.N. matters and travel details would be conveyed to me through an officer who would travel to Caracas shortly.

The third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea dealt with the seabed regime, mining, continental shelf, straits rights, territorial rights, rights of passage, archipelagos, landlocked countries, transit rights and a host of matters relating to division of wealth and authority with justice and equity – no easy task. On 5 August, at 10.40 am, I delivered my first speech on the economic zone at the second session.

The last plenary session was held on 29 August, after which the flags were lowered. The next Law of the Sea conference will be held from 17 March to 3 May 1975 (plus ten days if necessary) in Geneva. Ambassador Amarisinghe of Sri Lanka, whom I had come to know since the 1972 UN session in New York, presided over this conference in Caracas with dexterity and distinction.

Ambassador Ali Muntasser of Libya was, I remember, very friendly and helpful. Libya and Venezuela are both members of OPEC. Venezuela produces three and half million barrels of oil a day and is the fifth largest oil exporter in the world. Libya has only one Embassy in the whole of Latin America and that is here in Caracas. After the Conference I had to stay on for some more days to see the President as a Special Envoy on another matter of interest to Pakistan in the UN. The President, however, was very busy immediately after the Sea Conference, which must have taken its toll on all government functionaries with so many days of incessant diplomatic activity by so many nations.

Accompanied by Shaukat Farid, a director from the Foreign Office, I left Caracas on 13 September, by PANAM at 2:30 pm, for Brazil, the fifth largest country in the world. Our Third Secretary from Brazilia, a bright young diplomat called Aziz Ahmad Khan whom I had met a few months earlier, received us at Rio and put us up at Hotel Leme Palace on the Copacabana Beach. The next day, in the Governor's boat we went on a cruise to see the famous 120 ft tall statue of Jesus on a sugarloaf hill by teleferic and then had lunch at a northern provincial style restaurant. In the evening we had dinner and watched the floor show at Sucato.

On 15 September, Ambassador Aslam Malik, First Secretary Nasir Ahmad Shah and Brazilian Protocol people received us at the airport at Brasilia. TV and press people were also there. I stayed at Hotel Nacional. This new capital is in the midst of nowhere and as far as one can see there is one vast empty open landscape that could have been on the moon. On the 16th morning, with our Ambassador, called on the Foreign Minister at 11:00 am and handed over a copy of the Prime Minister's letter to their President. After a day's formal calls left for Rio de Janeiro and thence on to Buenos Aires.

On 18 September, our Ambassador Saad Khairi and Argentine Protocol people received Shaukat Farid and myself at the Ezeiza Airport, about 40 kms from Buenos Aires, the most sophisticated city in Latin America with a population of six million. I was in the Hotel Shereton by 9:30 am. The weekend before we arrived, about 20 bomb explosions had taken place in and around the city, apparently caused by the leftist revolutionaries called Montoneros, according to government sources. Our Ambassador, who liked to chew *paan* and play bridge, confirmed that one to three murders a day are common, and a number of "disappearances".

On 19 September, we went sightseeing. Despite the ubiquitous bombing this is a city where people roam around the streets at 2:00 in the morning. They are a night people, I believe. It was quite chilly late in the evening. On the morning of 20

September I visited the Chancery at the heart of the city near the Jockey Club and the Vatican's embassy, the Nunciatura. Ministers Sherpao and Nawab Raisani had visited Buenos Aires earlier, the latter for the inauguration of Maria Estella (Isabel) Peron as President. With Ambassador Khairi and Shaukat Farid I called on the acting Foreign Minister at 6:00 pm.

On 21 September, Shaukat Farid and I went on a cruise on the estuary of the River Plate on one of the large tourist boats that leave every hour or so from Tigre, a town on the delta some miles from the city centre. At the mouth of the estuary it is about 140 miles wide, second only to the Amazon River.

On return I played bridge with Ambassador and Mrs. Khairi and another guest and had dinner at their house at Vicente Lopez. It is a suburb of Buenos Aires, close to the official residence of the President, which is more like a country house and is in fact called the 'Presidencial Quinta' (country house). The Casa Rosada (Pink House) is the ceremonial President's House but it is his office, and not his residence, at the heart of the sprawling city. Sometimes Presidents commute between home and office in a helicopter to avoid heavy road traffic, I have been told.

On 22 September, Shaukat Farid and I went 50 km out of town to a restaurant named "Blue Pine" where the steak stuck out a few inches beyond the large plate at either end. While we tucked into the ample steak, there was a dance by a local troupe, here generally classified as folklore based on rural gaucho (cowboy) culture. The gaucho is looked upon patronizingly, and not as heros or strong silent loners as in the case of the wild west of early American days. Despite our best efforts we managed only about half the steak, though mine was delicious and juicily rare, as I prefer. In the city there was a parade ushering in spring with floats and girls dressed in fancy costume. The Argentines are a good looking people and generally well dressed. They like to eat well and live well and most manage it as it is the only country in Latin America with a solid and affluent middle class majority.

On 25 September, we left at 7:30 pm, by Branif. There was a halt at Santiago de Chile and then we went on to Lima, Peru at 1:30 am (11:30 pm, in Argentina). On the 26 I called on Minister of Interior and Acting Foreign Minister at 12:30 in the afternoon. I explained our position and gave him a copy of Prime Minister's letter to the Peruvian President. At the end of the interview he promised unequivocal support. At 5:00 pm, I called on the Minister of Industries and Tourism and then visited their cottage industries centre. The budget here is every two years, 1 January 1975 to 31 December 1977. 100 million dollars had been allocated for tourism for the two years including a project at the famous Inca ruins at Machu Picchu. About six million people speak Quechua, the language of the indigenous people and their Kings, the Inca. The total population is 12 to 14 million Peruvians. Lima at that time had a population of about three million. The government came to power six years earlier.

We could not go to Cusco on the 28th to visit the ruins due to political trouble there caused by students and labour unions, we were told.

On 30 September, at 2:30 pm, we left Lima by Avianca Airlines and arrived at Bogota airport at 5 pm. Although almost on the equator, Bogota situated on a plateau at 8500 feet above sea level is cool like Quito. The Equator divides the country in half and provides rain almost the whole year. Colombia is famous for its coffee, emeralds, and Nobel Prize winning writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Unfortunately, it is also known for the infamous drug mafia. The capital, Bogota, has a population of almost three million, like Lima, Karachi, Tehran and Bangkok.

As I embarked on a short walk in the afternoon on the first day I was accosted by a young man, 'a college student' he said he was. He wanted to sell me a sizeable emerald (Colombian emeralds are perhaps the best in the world). I asked to consult a jeweller. "Not necessary", he replied. He said he would prove it is genuine. And to demonstrate the point he scraped the emerald against a shop window. True enough, there was a huge scratch on the pane. Poor shopkeeper. As it did not improve my poor knowledge of real gems and the seller was reluctant to show it to a jeweller no business transaction was possible between us.

On 1 October, I visited the famous Gold museum (another famous one with the same name is in Lima) with artefacts of the Chibcha civilization. Later visited the museum of modern art.

On 2 October, I called on the Secretary General of Colomia who agreed to support Pakistan's candidacy at the UN and promised to send immediate instructions to their delegation at New York. I visited the house of the Liberator Simon Bolivar. Born in Caracas in 1783, the 'Liberator' is the national hero of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia for achieving independence from Spain. In 1819 he became the President of Gran Colombia (Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama until 1903). A high point of the tour was reached when with my escort from the Panamanian Foreign Ministry I visited the Canal Zone. I was privileged to visit the control room and move a lever that activated the opening of locks in order to allow a ship to cross the Panama Canal. In point of fact the waterlevel of the sea is of course the same in the Caribbean as well as the Pacific but there is a difference of about 80 ft in the level of the land between them, hence the necessity for the division into compartments. Built by the United States corps of engineers from 1904 to 1914 the Canal is 82 km/51 miles long and 150-metres/490 ft wide in most places. About 17,000 ships pass through the canal every year. In accordance with the Treaty of 1977, Panama took over the Canal from the US in 1999.

On 4 October, I reached Mexico city at 20:55 hours. The Mexican Minister of Tourism, Julio Hirchfeld Almada, Ambassador Anwar Afridi and his staff, as well as our Honorary Consul Oscar Obregon II received us. The press and TV were also there. I stayed at Hotel Camino Real. At 1 pm, on 5 October, with Ambassador Afridi we called on the President of Mexico Luis Echeverria Alvarez. He promised full support. At 7:00 pm, attended a cocktail with Ambassador Castro y Castro of the Foreign Office. The local TV interviewed me after that.

On 6 October, with Embassy staff and Shaukat Farid and his wife Marina, who had flown in from New York to join him, we visited the Pyramids outside the city. From 7 to 9 pm there was a reception by Ambassador and Mrs. Afridi at the house of our Honorary Consul.

7 October is Father's death anniversary. With Ambassador Afridi I went to the national monument to lay a wreath and then paid a courtesy call on the Minister for Tourism. At 2:30 pm, attended a lunch given by former President of Mexico Miguel Aleman Valdez. In the evening the Minister for Tourism hosted a dinner at a hacienda. The Minister's wife and other ladies were also there and our Ambassador and Mrs. Afridi. A Mexican dance troupe performed.

On 8 October, I visited the Museum of Anthropology, followed by a lunch with a Bank Manager, Ambassador and Mrs. Afridi, the Third Secretary and a travel agent.

I left for the airport with Shaukat Farid and Oscar Obregon to take a plane to Acapulco, where I stayed at the Hotel Plaza. Oscar and his German fiancée invited me to dinner and to a discothèque after.

On 9 October, we went to see the Convention Centre and had a drive around Acapulco, after which at 4:00 pm, we lunched at Oscar Obregon's house called Nirvana. The Visitors Book sports many famous names including Henry Kissinger's. The main bedroom has an indoor swimming pool about eight feet away from the bed. There is an ample pool outside as well and a panoramic view of the bay way down below, through the gaps between huge Doric columns placed at the end of the garden. Later we visited the Princess Hotel with its general air of opulence and its airconditioned indoor tennis court.

The quality of the sea is basically the same, notwithstanding the temperature of the water and the air around, and except for the waters of the Dead Sea, one would drown in all the others. Still, one should not pass up a sea without a dip if possible. It is like visiting a country and not tasting its cuisine. So, on 10 October with Shaukat, Oscar and others we went for a bathe in the sea before leaving at 2:30 pm. From Mexico City airport, where the Ambassador and staff came to meet us, at 4:30 pm, left for New York where we landed at 8:30 pm (10:30 New York time). Mian Qadruddin received us and accompanied me to my old haunt, the Plaza Hotel.

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Years later in 1978 I enjoyed two or three weeks of carefree travel by train. My barrister friend Halim Sharif and I spent a few days in London whereafter he was to have joined me on this European tour by train but unfortunately had to cancel it because of some personal problems. Stopping at random after Paris, I visited Rome, the Vatican, Milan, Florence and Venice as well as smaller places like Pisa (with its leaning tower), Assisi, Verona and Padua. In Milan Justice Feroze Nana's daughter

and her Italian husband invited me to their home for lunch. They provided me a glimpse of middle class liberal western culture in having their young maid-cum-nanny join us at table. I was also shown around the imposing cathedral. This being out-of-season there was no ballet or opera performance at La Scala but we attended a concert there. I recall I bought a pair of boots at Ferragamo's. Florence, with its sculpture, was for me both a poem and a painting, and I wish I could just lose myself in the streets for an eon or two. In art, culture and history, and in the appreciation of beauty, and in the good life, Italy is far and away in the lead, along with France.

At Venice I disembarked from the train and got on to a motor launch taxi called vaporetto and found myself a close witness to an unfolding real life drama. A full blooded and well-made young lady refused to disembark from the vaporetto with her Alsatian when ordered to do so. She was informed that dogs were not allowed on the boat. She refused to budge and the boat people were scared of her or her dog or both. Minutes ticked away and passengers got restive. There was no end to the impasse. Finally, the boat people resumed the journey and rang up the police. At the next stop on the canal the guardians of the law appeared in force and threatened the recalcitrant passenger. She refused to be browbeaten or to leave the boat and had to be bodily helped out by two policewomen. The dog seemed to enjoy the fuss and jumped off the boat wagging his tail the while, when his mistress was off loaded. I admired her spirit. I enjoyed my Italian tour a great deal. However, I would have enjoyed the Mediterranean cruise in the company of friends, the Couderts and others, and like the fish that got away, I feel that the non-realized dream would have been absolutely fabulous.

After Italy I proceeded to Sweden and stayed for about a week with Ture and Astrid and their two lovely daughters. A movie we saw called "Autumn Sonata" had Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann performing as mother and daughter with superb skill. We also went to visit a professor friend of the Andersson's at the University of Uppsala, which was established in 1477. The most progressive symbol of Sweden's enlightened social mores was meeting a lady priest at a church. She happened to be the daughter-in-law of the Prime Minister.

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CHAPTER VIII

Martine

Martine Quentric had come to Islamabad in the early 1970s with her journalist husband Alain Monard and their baby daughter Nathalie, about two years old. Before I met them Alain had fallen in love with Rene whose husband, an American, worked for one of the UN agencies. Alain and Martine were waiting for a formal divorce. Laila Muzaffar Hussain, an accomplished socialite, is from the well-known family of the Ispahanis with business interests in Bengal and Burma from pre-partition days. Her husband Muzaffar Hussain had been the Chief Secretary in East Pakistan, and a prisoner-of-war in India after Dhaka fell to the Indian army on 16 December 1971. Laila was not a Penelope temperamentally, to sit and weave and unweave; she used to throw parties. When Zafri returned, the hospitality continued unabated.

On 19 April 1972, I had met Martine, who was about 25 years of age, at a party in Laila's basement, which she had converted to a party room. Martine had been a bit down in the mouth when I first met her. However, she was good company and naturally high spirited and soon the gloom dissipated. She rode a powerful motorcycle instead of a charger and wore a white and yellow steel helmet, and unlike Lady Godiva she usually wore slacks and a sleeveless blue sweater. I also had a go at the motorbike and drove it off the road and down the slope. Luckily there was no great damage done to the machine or to me.

Martine and I often found ourselves thrown together as our social circles frequently coalesced. Between her spells of painting – she later held an exhibition in Islamabad – Martine decided to sit for the French foreign service competitive exam. She did well and was posted to Bangkok as a diplomat. When she hesitated, I counselled her to accept the posting. Martine did not seem too pleased at my ready acceptance of her prospected departure, and in her wilful way disregarded my advice and rejected the foreign service job.

Now from New York, on 11 October 1974, I spoke to the Prime Minister about my marrying Martine in London. He was happy. He and Begum Nusrat Bhutto had had us over at dinners and functions. Just as he had not divorced his first wife, an older cousin whom he had married while in his teens, and who continued to live in rural Sindh when he married Nusrat, neither had I. In many Asian and African societies the first wife remains as the respected number one, in the original or rural home, and the second concurrent, consecutive, or subsequent wives, are usually placed in a separate establishment. Pearl Buck's famous novel "Good earth," begins with the senior wife considering a young woman as a 40th birthday present for her husband, or because she had attained that age. Though wives are not that altruistic

and generous even in China today, a sort of acquiescence – with or without grace – is not unusual in these parts.

I arrived at Heathrow airport a little after 9 in the morning and was received by our High Commission staff and the helpful Arbab, the tall and handsome Pakhtun representative of our Tourism Ministry. Martine and her daughter Nathalie were also there. The same evening, 14 October, Didi and Tony invited us as well as Arbab Sahib to dinner at the Oriental Club. In the Bangladesh Gazette my son Raja Devasish's succession was notified, after three years when my brother Samit had been serving as Regent. The next day Iqbal Ismi, a businessman friend, who now divided his time between London, Vancouver and Karachi, invited Martine and me to the Shezan restaurant. In the evening we went to a French restaurant nearby. Nathalie stayed with Martine's friends Fred and Anne, who had spent some time in Islamabad before settling down in London. Fred had a pronounced British sense of humour and a healthy disregard for superficialities. Anne, a frenchwoman, was soft and gentle, and antithetical to Martine.

From Hotel Carlton Tower on the morning of 18 October, we set off for the Thai Buddhist Temple at Christchurch Road, East Sheen. This monastery was set up in 1965 at the invitation of British Buddhists and was the first in Europe. Subsequently, a larger site was acquired in 1976 at Wimbledon where a large monastery and temple complex was established later.

We were accompanied by H.E. Mumtaz Mohammad Khan Daultana our High Commissioner and other Embassy personnel; Laila Muzaffar Hussain and her son Sanjay, and Iqbal Ismi; Martine's younger brother Jean Yves and sister Brigitte, who had both come over from France; Nathalie, Arbab Sahib and his eight-year-old daughter; Didi, Tony, Dr. Ramendu Shekar Dewan, a Chakma scientist who lives in England; and my friend Sadri Ispahani. Sadri, who has settled in England but visits Bangladesh often on business, had attended St. Paul's School at Darjeeling and had taken part on our sport's day as his school's representative sprinter many years ago. Sadri and I shared a common birthday with Field Marshal Ayub Khan. The three of us were born on the 14 May. Martine and I got married at 10:30 in the morning. The ceremony lasted about half an hour. Then we offered "Dana" (lunch) to the monks. This was followed by sweets and tea for the guests. Later at Tony and Didi's house at Farnham, we had a Chakma ceremony, followed by lunch. Martine, two months short of 28, was dressed like an eastern bride in a red and gold Benares silk sari and gold ornaments. I was dressed in a dark blue suit, and was 41 years of age.

Iqbal Ismi held a reception for us at the Devonshire Club in the evening. The next day we went to a quiet countryside for a few days before I left for Muscat, Oman on 22 October, to spend a few days with Angus and Moitri. Angus Hume was now working for an Omani business firm. He had a nice house only a few yards from the sea. At a stopover at Bahrain the Pakistan Ambassador informed me of the latest cabinet reshuffle in which I had been excluded. The Pakistan Charge d'Affaires in Muscat gave a dinner for me. The Egyptian Ambassador and an Under-Secretary of

Oman attended besides Angus and Moitri. After a pleasant stay in Muscat I returned to Islamabad on Sunday, 27 October.

On 29 October I was asked to see the Prime Minister at his residence at 8:00 pm. We discussed my recent tour and then Bhutto said that due to Bangladesh recognition, and Mujib's feelings (the last was a bit incongruous in that Mujib was not likely to have objected to my old status all anew!), he had to exclude me from the cabinet. He wanted me to be available for giving objective advice and wanted my office located near his. He would send me out on foreign tours too, he told me. Then the Ambassador-designate to Tunisia, a politician from the NWFP, joined us and we had dinner together. Subsequently the Cabinet Secretary Vaqar Ahmed and I had some discussions about the nitty gritties of my new assignment and status, which was that of a Federal Minister, in article 6 in the warrant of precedence. The Prime Minister did not like the term "Adviser" but I preferred it to Counsellor and finally Bhutto acquiesced.

A few days after my return from Oman, mail from London arrived, and a telegram: "Heartiest congratulations on your marriage. I have yesterday reconstituted federal cabinet. You will no doubt appreciate why it was not possible for me to include you in the cabinet. This will, however, in no way affect your position as far as facilities and amenities provided to you as federal minister are concerned. You will continue to draw pay and have house car etc., as hitherto. Prime Minister of Pakistan." It had been sent on the 23rd of October, but perhaps Ambassador Mumtaz Khan Daultana, the experienced politician and diplomat, thought it best not to tell me about it on phone in Muscat.

On 31 October, Martine and I attended Prime Minister's banquet for Henry Kissinger and his wife Nancy at Prime Minister's house.

One of the local English newspapers, Morning News, wrote of me as "a man of considerable taste and style". Earlier in 1973, a magazine called Society and Screen with my photograph on their cover had named me "man of the year 1972" in a write up that had, however, one important inaccuracy. It said I was offered the Presidency of Bangladesh by Sheikh Mujib but I had refused. Actually they had it mixed up because it had been Bhutto and the Presidency of Pakistan, but they were writing from second or third hand information.

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Sometime in 1975 I was designated as Minister-in-waiting to the President of Turkey Admiral Korutuk when he came to Pakistan for a few days and Martine as Lady-in-Waiting to Mrs. Korutuk. The Turkish President gave a return banquet in which a gold service that he had brought from Ankara was used. Gold and silver plates were supposed to help as an antidote to poison in the old days when poisoning was a popular method of getting rid of enemies, particularly political adversaries, and sometimes rivals in the pursuit of love. We accompanied them to Lahore and to

Karachi where a naval exercise was put on for the Turkish President. When they left they invited us to Turkey.

After I had left my home in Rangamati in early November 1971, the family had remained on, naturally, in Rangamati. I had come alone to West Pakistan in order to go to Southeast Asia as a Special Envoy of Pakistan to try to avert an imminent war with India, and to try and bring about a political solution to the East Pakistan crisis. I have never been back. In 1976 three of my children, my eldest daughter and my second and third sons joined me in Pakistan. Martine and I had broken up by then and she had chosen to go back to France with Nathalie and our infant son Padma Gwenhael. So, in 1976, instead of Martine, my daughter Chandra accompanied me on a visit to Turkey as guests of the Turkish Government. Among the impressive sites and events there, two have somehow remained in my mind. One was the whirling Dervishes to remind one of the Sufi Poet Rumi who is known as Mevlana in Turkey. We had the privilege of visiting Konia where Rumi is buried. They also have a replica of Iqbal's grave there as a gsture of love and respect for Pakistan's poet-philosopher. The other was a journey on the road to Ephesus that Saul of Tarsus had tred, when he had a vision and heard a pained voice saying to him "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute my followers?" Saul the Gentile, underwent a transformation, embraced Christianity and became, along with Peter, the foremost of Jesus' disciples. He became known as the Apostle Paul. Not too far from this road is a shrine on a hill that we visited. It is believed that Mary mother of Jesus is buried there.

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CHAPTER IX

My Caribbean tours and Bangladesh power transfers through the gun

On 7 August 1975, I was received by our Honorary Consul-General Kazmi at the Port AU Spain airport, Trinidad, Naipaul's birthplace. The country is called Trinidad and Tobago and produces asphalt, copra, sugar and rum. It has a population of 1.1 million, and only 7 miles separate it from the Venezuelan coast. The latter island changed flags 31 times in 200 years. Before that perhaps it did not bother with flags. Kazmi was a British trained surgeon and a businessman who owned an airlines company and other enterprises. In the British system surgeons do not write Dr. before their name and neither did Kazmi. On 8 August, the very affable Governor General came to Kazmi's reception for me and invited me to his daughter's dance party on the morrow. He had been his country's Ambassador at Washington and Permanent Representative at the UN and had met our Prime Minister in his Foreign Minister days. He remembered ZAB with respect and affection.

On the 9th morning with Mrs. Kazmi and their driver I went to meet a Baptist Mission mother, who is also a voodoo specialist and diviner. While the driver went up the little hill on foot we waited. The Mother was not initially prepared to receive us that day but on being told that the visitor was from a distant country on a short visit she relented. Sultana Kazmi and I walked up the hill. While we were still a good ten metres from the staircase leading to the veranda, a voice said, "Pain, much pain in the tummy." I was astounded because around dawn that morning I had had a severe colic attack in the gall bladder region. As I had not mentioned this to anyone I was naturally surprised at the Mother's pronouncement. Sultana and I climbed to the veranda of this wooden building raised on stilts. At one end there sat on an easychair an immense woman of indeterminate age. She looked like Scarlett O'Hara's Mammy straight out of "Gone with the wind". After some chit chat she led me to the Church a few feet away and held a ceremony that was apparently an amalgam of Christian ritual and Voodoo. I obeyed without demur and lit candles and murmured after her all the esoteric formulae she chanted. Shortly thereafter I felt a lightness, as though a physical burden had been lifted from my shoulders. That evening I accompanied Kazmi, Sultana and their 16 year old daughter to the Governor General's dance party for his 19 year old daughter at Government House.

After visiting some other countries including Venezuela, Grenada, Costa Rica and Peru, on 23 August Ambassador Akhund saw me off at the airpirt at Quito, Ecuador. On 27 August I was in Bogota, Colombia. On 29 August I was in Mexico and on 31 August with Ambassador Anwar Afridi called on President Echeverria at 5.00 pm. The Foreign Minister of Mexico was also present. On concluding the Latin American and Caribbean tour, at times gruelling, I spent a few days in New York. On 5 September left New York at 7:05 pm on the cruise ship QE2 for Southampton, on a

five day tour of relaxed pleasure. The Cunard Line Cruise Ship is 293.5 meters long and has room for 1778 passengers.

On 15 September I underwent preliminary tests, which were arranged by our Embassy medical adviser Sir Alexander Drummond at the Military Hospital. He had arranged for me to have my operation at the Westminster Hospital, which I visited. However, at the intervention of some friends who knew the Surgeon Naunton Morgan I switched to the less posh Gordon Hospital. I am sorry if I inconvenienced Sir Alexander, for he had made excellent arrangements. Chandra came from Rangamati to be with me. She met Martine who arrived from her home in Brittany on the 14th and joined me in London. On 18 September I underwent a gall bladder operation, which I should have had years ago. I was informed it took about two and a half hours. On the 25th the surgeon told me I could eat anything including fat but had to build up eating habits gradually. I spent a few restful days as the guest of my friend Iqbal Ismi who in those days was living in Golders Green, driving around in a Cadillac and was quite a man about town.

On my various tours abroad to study tourism I recall also a special treat, a visit to a private wildlife park in Thoire, some miles out of Paris, by helicopter. Our Ambassador in Paris told me that the use of the Presidential helicopter by a Minister from another country was a special mark of regard. I have been lucky in my foreign tours and learnt a great deal – travel teaches, as everyone knows. I wish we could begin to realize our potentials and make greater progress in the field of tourism in Pakistan.

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Bangladesh emerged as an independent state on 16 December 1971. The ruling Awami League Party declared Sheikh Mujib as Prime Minister. However, as he was incarcerated in Pakistan at the time, another leader, Tajuddin Ahmed became acting Prime Minister. President Bhutto released Sheikh Mujib on 8 January 1972 and he went back to Bangladesh on 10 January via London, New Delhi and Calcutta, to take over as the President of Bangladesh. A year later, on 12 January 1973 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman resigned the Presidency in favour of Justice Abu Saeed Choudhary and became Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

On 25 January 1975 Sheikh Mujib introduced the Presidential form with a one-party system under a new constitution and became the President. On 15 August 1975 Mujib was killed in his Dhanmandi residence with his three sons and two daughters-in-law as well as his wife. In all 21 people were massacred. Two daughters survived as they were then in Europe. The coup was reportedly led by a group of six army majors, three of whom were Major Farooq Rahman, Major Khandkar Abdur Rashid and Major Shariful Haq Dalim. It was the latter's wife, it was said, that had been dishonoured by Sheikh Moni, one of Mujib's sons.

The son of a ruler being a bad egg and bringing doom to his father is not unique, nor without precedent. One well-known case is that of Lucius Tarquinus

Superbus, the 7th and last legendary King of Rome (534-510 BC). He was the son of Tarquinus Priscus and was too young to succeed his father. However, when he grew up he intrigued against his brother-in-law King Servius Tullius, instigated the patricians and had the King murdered, and himself ascended the throne. He attempted to set up a pure despotism but was eventually forced to flee Rome with his family because of the outrage of his son Tarquinius Sextus upon Lucretia. In the "Lays of Ancient Rome," a most eloquent piece of poetry, Lord Macaulay writes about Lars Porsena, and Horatius who defended the bridge and thus saved Rome from the attack of the hated Tarquins. Horatius says: "For how can man die better/than facing fearful odds/for the ashes of his fathers/and the temples of his gods."

After Mujib's assassination, another Awami League leader, Khondkar Mushtaq Ahmed was made the President by the coup leaders. During his Presidency, on 2 November 1975, Brigadier General Khalid Musharraf conducted another coup and took over power. After about four days various units of the army rebelled against him and on 7 November 1975 he was overthrown, and killed.

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In August 1975 I was on one of my tours of the Caribbean, and on the 15th morning at Kingston had gone to call on the President of Jamaica. It was he who informed me of the dreadful massacre of Mujib and his family, the news of which had just then been broadcast over the radio and television. Four important political leaders who had been arrested and incarcerated by the coup leaders, were subsequently gunned down at Dhaka Central Jail on 3 November 1975. They were former acting President-in-exile Syed Nazrul Islam, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad and two Ministers, M. Qamruzzaman and Mansur Ali.

According to an account published more than twenty-five years later: "17 army personnel and four politicians, among them a sitting MP of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party, were charged in the murder of the four men. He remains free on bail. Five others accused in the case, including one politician and four army officers, remain in jail as the Supreme Court considers their appeals of death sentences assessed by a lower court for the murder of Sheikh Mujibur." "The rest fled the country soon after Sheikh Hasina came to power in 1996. The long-delayed trial started during Sheikh Hasina's rule, when parliament scrapped an indemnity act that had provided constitutional protection from prosecution to coup leaders."

It has been established that some of Mujib's killers were middle and lower ranking military officers. Some of them had been given foreign postings and attached to Bangladesh missions abroad as military attaches by the successor government. Khondkar Mushtaq succeeded Mujib as President and indemnified the killers. Farooq and Rashid were promoted as Lieutenant Colonels. On 6 November 1975 Chief Justice Sayem was made President. Brig. Khalid Musharraf staged a coup and had the chief of army, Major General Ziaur Rahman arrested and put under guard. Then

Musharraf was overthrown and General Ziaur Rahman reinstated. After a series of coups and counter coups as well as a mutiny by the troops Ziaur Rahman came to power on 7 November 1975.

Ziaur Rahman came to Pakistan and I met him at a banquet given for him by Prime Minister Bhutto. He wanted to have a private meeting with me, which was arranged the following day at the guesthouse where he was staying. While I was alone, he was accompanied by a bevy of ministers and advisers. The main point he made was a request to me to ask Manabendra Larma to call off the guerrilla movement. He had nothing to offer the Hill Tracts people in return. In this he was like Mujib before him, and Ershad after him.

On 21 April 1977 President Justice A.M. Sayem resigned and General Ziaur Rahman, who was the Martial Law Administrator became President of the country. In 1978 Ziaur Rahman won the Presidential elections and in 1979 led his newly created Bangladesh National Party (BNP) to a sweeping victory in the general elections.

The Chittagong Circuit House is situated on the crest of a slightly elongated, oblong, igloo like rise. It is a two-storeyed high ceilinged teakwood and brick house with a many-angled roof that served as a resthouse for senior bureaucrats and visiting dignitaries. It was here that years ago I had been presented to the Shah of Iran and to Queen Elizabeth II.

On a tour to Chittagong President Ziaur Rahman was staying at this Circuit House as usual. At around midnight on 30 May 1981 some rebellious soldiers, under General Officer Commanding Chittagong Division Major General Muhammad Abdul Manzoor, went to the Circuit House, and after an altercation with the President, shot him dead.

The rebellion was put down within two days and the military putsch by a group of officers under Major General Manzoor failed. The ringleader was apprehended at a tea garden in Fatikcheri, north of Chittagong when he was trying to escape and was shot dead by soldiers loyal to General Ziaur Rahman. It had been given out that General Manzoor was trying to escape to Burma. This is incorrect because Burma is to the south of Chittagong and he was apprehended well outside the city, to the north of Chittagong. He was obviously heading for Tripura, India, across the Feni River. A handful of other conspirators were apprehended by the Zia loyalists and once Manzoor was dead, these men, it is believed, were liquidated. Ziaur Rahman was respected in his country for his scrupulous probity. There was never a whisper of nepotism or the slightest hint of corruption in his record as General and as President. However, he did gain power through a coup detat, and he did undertake draconian measures against the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

On 31 May 1981, I went to Ambassador of Bangladesh Nazrul Islam's residence to sign the condolence book for President Ziaur Rahman. Then I went to the airport to receive the Chinese Prime Minister and in the afternoon attended Foreign Minister Agha Shahi's reception for him.

After Ziaur Rahman, Abdus Sattar, a judge of the Supreme Court, became President of Bangladesh. At the time General H.M. Ershad was Army Chief. He assumed control of government after Sattar left on 24 March 1982 and declared Martial Law and dissolved the National Assembly. He made himself Chief Martial Law Administrator, and later President in December 1983. On 31 March 1985 he won a referendum. His new found political party, the Jatiya Party won the elections held in 1986. The new Assembly was convened on 10 July 1986. Ershsad retired from the army on 31 August 1986, became a civilian President on 15 October and took oath of office on 23 October 1986. He resigned from office due to street demonstrations and strikes against him and declared elections for March 1988. He stepped down on 4 December 1990. Ziaur Rahman's wife Khaleda Zia won the elections but could not complete her term due to the successful agitational politics of Sheikh Mujib's daughter Hasina Wajed. The two lady leaders have since been succeeding each other in the Bangladesh elections.

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CHAPTER X

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and some of his comrades

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto appointed Mian Mahmood Ali Kasuri, a distinguished politician and lawyer, Law Minister and Chairman of the Constitution Committee of the National Assembly that drafted the 1973 Constitution. However, Kasuri wanted a Federal Parliamentary Constitution whereas Bhutto preferred a Presidential system. According to Mian Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, the son of Mian Mahmood Ali Kasuri, and Foreign Minister in the Jamali cabinet (which was sworn in on 23 November 2002), as reported in the "Friday Times" of July 12-18, 2002: "Mr. Bhutto scrawled on a file that he wanted a quasi-presidential system that was 'as near parliamentary as possible'. Mian Mahmood Ali resigned three times during his tenure as Law Minister; each time Mr. Bhutto convinced him to return in the national interest." However, Kasuri finally decided that the only way for him to ensure that the spirit of the Constiution was parliamentary was to resign once and for all and to quit the PPP. He achieved this purpose, and for this reason, is regarded by many as the father of the 1973 Constitution. After the PPP, Mian Mahmood Ali Kasuri joined Air Marshal Asghar Khan's Tehrik-e-Istiqlal and was an active member of the party at the time of his death in 1987, according to Khurshid Kasuri.

Mian Mahmood Ali Kasuri was my senior colleague (he ranked immediately after the seniormost minister J.A. Rahim). I had called on him once at his Lahore residence. He introduced me to two of his sons, Khurshid who was a barrister and Omar, who was also a lawyer. One of them asked if I was also a lawyer and their father immediately replied, "No, but he was a judge". He was referring to my judicial capacity as the Chakma Raja. We discussed certain changes that the Parsis wanted to their law of inheritance. Mian Kasuri was ever indulgent toward me and I recall in 1972 he remembered my birthday and came to my residence at Islamabad with his son, daughter-in-law and a little granddaughter about three and a half years old. The little girl said, "Happy birthday." I was touched.

Mian Kasuri, when asked by Bhutto to become the Law Minister, had declined, having preferred to live in his hometown Lahore. However, he was persuaded to accept the assignment. Rafi Raza, in his book "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan" mentions this fact and also Bhutto's reaction, which was one of suspicion about Kasuri's motives for rejecting his offer initially. In October 1972 Kasuri resigned.

Bhutto had fallen out with his second-most senior Cabinet Minister Mian Mahmood Ali Kasuri who was his Minister for Law. He was an eminent barrister, who had the distinction of standing first in the bar exams in London in his day. His main shortcoming, from Bhutto's view was his unwillingness to compromise on what he considered 'principles', and his distaste for what he felt was Bhutto's increasing

arbitrariness in form, content and style of rule. Roedad Khan in "Witness to history" (Dawn), writes: "The 1973 Constitution elevated the status of the prime minister while reducing the status of the president and incorporated provisions presumed to deter the army from interfering in politics. Mian Mahmood Ali Kasuri, a member of the drafting committee and law minister, concerned about the head of state's "uncontrolled power" to dissolve the National Assembly, resigned his committee post and cabinet position. It is unfortunate that Mr. Bhutto violated the sanctity of the Constitution and the constitutional accord by a series of unilateral amendments in the Constitution in the teeth of opposition from his political opponents. In the process, he destroyed the delicate political compromise, which formed the basis of the 1973 Constitution, weakened his position and exposed himself to vicious attacks. Ultimately, he was overtaken by forces he thought he had neutralized and had in fact re-empowered."

It is true that Bhutto preferred the presidential system even if under the name of Prime Minister. I distinctly recall two separate occasions (not at cabinet meetings but in the drawingroom) when he informally sought the opinion of some of his cabinet colleagues. He was disappointed in that almost all of us preferred the parliamentary form of government and not an all-powerful President. Regrettably, as events showed later, he increasingly manifested an authoritarian bent of mind, and an increasing reluctance to listen to any dissenting voice. In the chequered history of Pakistan, there has been more of authoritarian rule than democratic, even when the façade had been one of parliamentary democracy. Given our record, whether democracy will take root is hard to predict.

One day, in the National Assembly, Mian Kasuri, a big, burly man whom Helmut Kohl resembles, was ejected from the House on the order of the Speaker. I do not remember the details leading upto it but I witnessed the elderly and widely respected Mahmood Ali Kasuri protesting in his powerful voice, his legs flailing, being bodily carried away from the Assembly chamber for refusing to shut up and sit down. Though I was an Independent member and did not belong to the PPP, I had felt ashamed and much diminished as a member of the Assembly and as a member of the cabinet, at having to witness such an indignity being inflicted on a parliamentarian of immense dignity, courage and integrity.

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Bhutto's guide and mentor and one of the founding fathers of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was the former Indian Civil Service (ICS) administrator and retired diplomat (Ambassador to France at one time), Jalaluddin Ahmed (J.A.) Rahim. He was the seniormost of the Ministers and a man of learning and unflinching integrity and probity. His popularity rating with Bhutto had been on the wane because he was a straight talker and one who frequently showed his disapproval of what Rahim considered Bhutto's increasingly wayward and arbitrary actions. So the Prime Minister had started bypassing him from crucial decision taking meetings. On

2 July 1974, something horrid happened to him after which he parted ways with Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto.

The version that is widely accepted as the true account of the fateful event is that J.A. Rahim had been invited to dinner by the Prime Minister, and along with the other invitees was made to wait for a long time, while Bhutto was at a meeting in an adjoining room discussing measures proposed for Balochistan, from which Rahim had been pointedlty excluded. He felt he was being dealt with cavalierly, no word of apology having come from the host. Rahim, a man in his late 60s or early 70s, voiced his vexation at what he considered Bhutto's feudal arrogance: "What does he think he is? The Raja of Larkana? I am leaving." With that he left the Prime Minister's house in Rawalpindi and returned to his house in Islamabad. Rahim's words may have been transmitted to Bhutto with a few embellisments, as often happens. In the wee hours of the morning of the 3rd, Federal Security Force (FSF) personnel, an outfit like the Brownshirts of yesteryears that Roedad Khan in his book "Pakistan - a dream gone sour" describes as "a fascist praetorian guard" stormed into his house, and mercilessly beat up Rahim and his son, both of whom required hospitalization.

> Rafi Raza writes in his book, *Zilfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan:* "However, the sacking of J.A. Rahim as Senior Federal Minister on the night of 2 July 1974, and the nature of his subsequent treatment, was the most serious indictment of ZAB's conduct. On leaving a lengthy meeting on Balochistan, he was infuriated to learn that Rahim had refused to wait any longer for a large dinner for politicians, military and civilian officers, and had walked out, commenting dismissively on the 'Wadera of Larkana'. He announced Rahim's sacking at the dinner and, at the same time, to my surprise, he appointed me in his place. After dinner, when I pointed out that I had not been consulted first, he replied 'I have made the announcement in front of everyone, and there is no question of going back on it.'
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> "Rahim was my neighbour in Islamabad. When I got home I found that he and his son had been beaten up and taken to a nearby police station. I brought them back to their house after two in the morning and, with difficulty, secured the help of a doctor. The next evening ZAB insisted that the beating-up had resulted from one of the messengers sent with the dismissal note being fired at by Rahim. I urged that if the attack on Rahim had arisen from some error there was every reason for ZAB to apologize to his friend and former colleague. Sadly, this was not to be and they never again communicated directly. Mubashir and I arranged for Rahim to go abroad to keep him out of further trouble, but on his return he continued to criticize ZAB, and was subjected to renewed ill-treatment. Clearly, this was intended to serve as a lesson and to instill fear in others.
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> "Mubashir Hasan was the next to leave government in October 1974. His disillusionment had come early: he first tendered his resignation in November 1972 and then again in August 1973. However, ZAB's arguments prevailed with him on those two occasions. This time, he decided to stay on

in Egypt, where his brother was posted, until the Cabinet reshuffle was in place. His differences with ZAB had increased over the past two years. ZAB had tired of his doctrinaire, leftist views, while Mubashir as Finance Minister found it difficult to cope with ZAB's increasing demands on behalf of friends." Rafi Raza continues, "Hayat Sherpao fared no differently in the Frontier. A few months before his death, he seriously considered leaving the Party altogether. He only changed his mind on the persuasion of myself and other friends from the Frontier, and when Mubashir Hasan agreed to become Secretary-General of the Party. A few months later, in February 1975, he was assassinated. Many feudals, even educated ones, seem to have difficulty in accepting the separation of state and personal properties and funds. Mubashir was greatly disturbed by ZAB's disregard for the original principles and purposes of the PPP. With his departure, within less than three years of the establishment of the PPP Government, all the original six — Rahim, Mubashir, Khar, Mairaj, Mumtaz and Sherpao — had either left or been alienated. In each case, ZAB was largely responsible. The camaraderie, a main feature of the early PPP years, ceased. Mir Afzal Khan and I both warned of the danger of this state of affairs, pointing out that he was isolating himself, replacing the affection his colleagues had felt for him with awe, if not fear."

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One of Prime Minister Bhutto's closest colleagues, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada and the framer of the 1973 constitution, was quoted in the Friday Times on 2-8 August, 2002 as under:

"In an interview to *Jang*, former PPP law minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada said that Bhutto wanted a presidential form of government and One Unit but the new National Assembly insisted on a bicameral parliament which Bhutto had to accept, but not without stipulating that for ten years the prime minister would not be removed through a no-confidence vote. The provinces had begun to assert which was the most powerful new element in post-1970 politics in West Pakistan. Bhutto was insulting to his close associates, including Rafi Raza and president Fazl Elahi. He succumbed to the flattery and cunning of General Zia and made him chief of staff over the heads of six senior generals. He built up the army thinking it would own him but the army got rid of him after becoming strong. The East Pakistan crisis was caused by the 1956 Constitution and its architect Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, a Punjabi who deprived the other wing through the principle of parity. Bhutto lost moral authority in the 1977 elections, which he rigged by getting rid of opposition candidates. Loss of legitimacy took place earlier when he dismissed the NAP government of Balochistan in February 1973 and the NWFP government resigned. Military action in Balochistan was a wrong step suggested to him by military commanders. In nationalization, the grabbing of small units was the wrong idea but one did not know whose suggestion it

was. Bhutto contradicted himself by promising *roti kapra aur makan* and a thousand years war against India in the same breath. Too many right-wing PPP elements led by Kausar Niazi got Bhutto to ban alcohol, night clubs and make Friday the off day."

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In one of the most readable accounts on contemporarily politics, though one may or may not agree with the author's views on certain matters and personalities, Sherbaz Khan Mazari in his book "A Journey to Disillusionment" says: "The other factor that undoubtedly played in Bhutto's psychological make up was his mother. This fact has already been well documented. His father Shah Nawaz married a Rajastani Hindu woman from the scheduled caste as his second wife. Upon marriage Bhutto's mother adopted Islam. In an ideal Muslim society no distinction should be made on the basis of race. Unfortunately, with the strong influence of Hindu culture in the sub-continent, these caste distinctions carry an all – pervasive stigma with them. Even to the present day members of the scheduled castes in Sindh – such as Bhils, Dheds, Mengwars and Shikaris – suffer extreme discrimination. Undeniably, one of the reasons for Bhutto's hypersensitivity to perceived slights stemmed from what was no more than an aberrance of birth. It was unlikely that his mother would have been accepted as an equal by the ladies of Shah Nawaz Bhutto's immediate or extended family... When his parents shifted to Junagadh in 1946 Bhutto remained in Bombay. In September 1947 he left India to pursue further education at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles. He made his first visit to the newly established Pakistan two years later in September 1949 during his university holidays. On his return to the US he shifted his studies to Berkeley University where he completed his degree in political science. At the end of 1950 he moved to England to attend Oxford University. He made his second holiday trip to Pakistan in early 1951. Over the short period of his stay he married for the second time. He returned to Oxford taking his new wife Nusrat with him. While Nusrat returned to Karachi to give birth to their first child her husband continued with his education in England. Upon completing his law degree he moved to London to attend the bar at Lincoln's Inn. He arrived in Karachi as a qualified barrister in November 1953, a month or so short of his twenty-sixth birthday."

Pirzada, a member of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's first Pakistan cabinet), and his Kashmiri Special Assistant Yusuf Buch. The latter told me of his knowledge of Bhutto's offer of the Presidency to me (I had spoken of it to very few) during my friend Ali Jan's dinner at his flat in Islamabad on 16 November 2000, 27 years later. Yusuf had come from New York and stayed on to attend the wedding of the son and daughter of two celebrated Kashmiris, on either side of the line of control. The other guest at the dinner table was another Kashmiri, Mahmud Kreashi, better known as 'Taffy'

After deposing Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on 5 July 1977, General Zia housed his erstwhile boss initially at the Government House in Murree. Bhutto was deeply outraged and thoroughly angry with Zia, whom he had promoted over six of his seniors to the top military position because Bhutto had been impressed by Zia's manifest and ostensible loyalty to him. When Zia went to see him in Murree, Bhutto abused him roundly and threatened him with reprisals for violating the Constitution and deposing him from the Office of Prime Minister.

Some political analysts felt that this was tantamount to Bhutto's signing his own death warrant because Zia now felt that it was either he or Bhutto – both could not survive. After a judicial trial Bhutto was convicted and executed on 4 April 1979. General Zia ruled thereafter for eleven years, until the fateful explosion in the plane that killed him, along with a number of his top generals and the American Ambassador, in the skies above Bahawalpur on 17 August 1988.

Reproduced is an article in the daily newspaper "The News" of 4 April 2002: "*Harbinger of democracy*" by Benazir Bhutto (Former Prime Minister of Pakistan):

> "Pakistan's modernizer Quaid-i-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto left deep footprints in the sands of history. To his lasting credit remains the 1973 Constitution of the country, the Simla Accord of 1972, which brought the longest peace between India and Pakistan, the social reforms to build an egalitarian society, the non-aligned foreign policy, the nuclear programme and the building of the social, economic and military infrastructure of the country.
>
> Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was an intellectual of the highest order, a thinker, author and an orator. He was deliberate, discreet, and competent; honest, upright and keeper of his covenants. He was a principled friend to the poor and the oppressed. He was a man of the people, fearless in his beliefs, who would only bow to the Almighty. His courage was such that he embraced martyrdom for his beliefs. Core to his belief was his faith in freedom and the liberation of humanity. The Quaid-i-Awam was a pan-Islamic nationalistic. He believed in one Muslim Nation and one Muslim

army stretching from the shores of Europe to the tips of Africa and Asia. He saw nationalism as the key to unity, rejecting fanaticism as such a route.

He gave pride to every Muslim. He was a hero of the Third World, who spoke boldly against racism, colonialism and imperialism. He mesmerized audiences with his power of speech. His voice would reach out to touch the hearts of his listeners. He spoke with poetry and passion. Yet it was the simplicity of the spoken word and the sincerity in it that touched the chords in the listeners' heart, captivating them forever. He had a superb memory, always remembering a person and surprising them with the date and venue of the meeting. He knew history and learnt well from it the lessons of leadership.

The Quaid-i-Awam fearlessly defended the right of nations to independence. When the 1973 war broke out, he sent Pakistan's military to defend the borders of the Muslim countries, including the Golan Heights of Syria. With the backing of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, he organized the Second Islamic Summit in Lahore where the Palestinian issue was adopted as the issue of the Islamic World, culminating in the peace talks in the Middle East. His short life of fifty years was spent in the service of many international, regional and national causes.

But the most important and the most enduring legacy of Shaheed Bhutto was raising the consciousness of the people of Pakistan for democracy. He awakened the masses, making them realize that they were the legitimate fountainhead of political power. He led the battle for their empowerment, galvanizing the masses to fight dictatorship and military rule. He opposed usurpers who grabbed power on the basis of brute force emanating from the barrel of a gun. He enlightened the farmer, the industrial worker, the student, the woman and the rest of the common people of their importance and that of their right of franchise.

He deeply cherished democracy and democratic values and in the end gave his life for freedom. Way back in 1969, when people were still to overthrow the Ayub dictatorship, he stood trial in Lahore High Court defending the lofty ideals of democratic rights for his fellow countrymen: "Yes, My Lords, democracy is certainly like a breath of fresh air, like the fragrance of a spring flower. It is a melody of liberty, richer in sensation than a tangible touch. But, more than a feeling, democracy is fundamental rights, it is adult franchise, the secrecy of the ballot, free press, free association, independence of the judiciary, supremacy of the legislature, controls on the executive, and other related conditions, which are conspicuously absent in the present regime's system."

He opposed the military rule considering it a cancer eating up the society. In the case of Pakistan, he viewed military rule as a negation of the very genesis

of the country, which came into being as a result of a democratic process. Living in the era of the Cold War when the warm waters of the Indian ocean stood temptingly before the Soviet Union while its ally India occupied Kashmir, he was determined to build a strong defence.

His contributions to an impregnable Pakistan are seen in the nuclear programme as well as in the Kamra Aeronautical factory. He built the Heavy Mechanical Complex and revived the morale of the armed forces after their surrender in Dacca. He brought back ninety thousand prisoners of war from Indian camps as well as Pakistani territory lost in the 1971 war. He in fact saved the armed forces from getting a bad name for a few drunken generals that had wreaked havoc in their ambition to keep power at national cost.

Prime Minister Bhutto believed that the army's indulgence in political quagmire was harmful to its professional competence as an institution. He said clearly: "The Pakistan Armed Forces cannot afford a moment's deviation from their real responsibility. For the sake of Pakistan's integrity, they simply cannot afford to get involved or absorbed in the political life of the country. Those soldiers who leave barracks and move into government mansions lose wars and become prisoners of war as happened in 1971."

His words rang true in 1981 when General Zia lost the Siachen Glacier and again in 1999 when Pakistan withdrew unilaterally from Kargil, refusing to even acknowledge the dead bodies of its soldiers. It rang true again in 2001 when Pakistan joined the War Against Terror only to see the Northern Alliance bring the change in Kabul over its own doomed efforts.

There were many who said that West Pakistan would disintegrate after the emergence of Bangladesh. Pakistan owes its second rebirth in 1971 to Bhutto's leadership. He lifted a nation drowning in despair to the Himalayan heights. Pakistan became an epicentre of the Muslim world with scholars in science, culture and intellectual pursuit harnessing their energies for the greater good. He was admired by the leading statesmen of the world community who saw in him a man who could direct the world to peace and progress.

Shaheed Bhutto's brilliant life filled Pakistan with energy and strength. There was a sense of purpose in the country, buzzing with ideas and enterprises. The growth rate increased and money poured in from expatriates who got the universal right to passport. The Muslim countries were donating about five hundred million dollars annually to Pakistan, making it less dependent on international financial institutions. The people got jobs and opportunities. He introduced fundamental human rights. Women of the country were emancipated entering the police force, foreign service and subordinate judiciary.

He had also warned of the ploys dictators adopt by inter-changing democracy with basic democracy. He said: "We demand democracy, and they give us basic democracy. If basic democracy is democracy, then why does every country not have it? If this is such a good system then the whole world should have had this system. But, nowhere in the world is this system in vogue. Neither in America, nor in England, nor in France, nor in India, nor in China, nor in Russia. Even then we are told that this is a wonderful system." After his struggle, basic democracies lost the value in the eyes of the common people who saw the system as a trick to rob them of the right to free franchise.

He was truthful to his values. When the time came he sacrificed his life but refused to compromise on his ideals. He was fond of saying: "It is better to live like a lion for one day than to live like a jackal for a thousand". He lived with the courage of a lion, defying death in embracing Martyrdom. He said he would show "how a leader of the people lives and dies", and he did. The world pleaded for his life wanting to save a man whose intellect and contribution to peace and progress was vital to the world community. But a frightened dictator ordered the execution in the middle of the night. His last words were: "I am innocent."

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto went bravely to the gallows. There was widespread national and international condemnation. Bhutto left his world to enter the pantheon of history where he stands today with other towering personalities who shaped the course of history. As a student of history, he knew that eternal life remains in sacrificing oneself for a cause that is larger than an individual. And the noblest of all causes is the cause of the liberation of humanity from tyranny and oppression. The Quaid-i-Awam was born in 1928 in Larkana and was martyred in 1979. Yet he lives in the hearts and minds of the people still shining like a star and brightens the sky motivating those caught in the prisons of oppression."

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The achievements of Bhutto include the return of the POWs, the dropping of Bangladesh demand for criminal trials, the return of about 7000 sq miles of Pakistan territory from Indian occupation, the achievement of a consensus constitution for Pakistan through the democratically elected parliament, and above all in giving the masses a sense of their rights and a modicum of dignity and self-worth, and his efforts at building a more egalitarian society. Despite his preference for western clothes, it was he who encouraged all classes of people to use the "awami libas", the shalwar and shirt, which hitherto was used only by the blue-collar workers and the hoi polloi.

CHAPTER XI

New Year in London

I stayed at the Plaza Hotel overlooking the Central Park in New York from September to December 1980. It was my second three-month spell at the Plaza Hotel but the third three-month stay in this fantastic city of cities to attend the UN General Assembly session. The first time, in 1964, with most of the delegates I had put up at the more modest Hotel Fourteen, which has since been dismantled. The Plaza has a certain note of understated old world elegance about it that I find appealing.

One evening, suddenly out of the blue a schizophrenic called Marc Chapman shot and killed John Lennon, the most famous pacifist and leader of the Beatles outside his apartment building when he was returning home with Yoko. With a friend I went as close as possible to the spot across Central Park. Thousands had gathered almost immediately, stunned with shock and sorrow. It was also on this visit that the representatives of Iran and Iraq castigated each other at the United Nations in no uncertain terms. I sat in the gallery of the Security Council and witnessed history in the making. Iran and Iraq went on to fight a war for about eight years and finally stopped, both terribly debilitated.

At the end of the session, on my way back to Islamabad I spent a few days in London. We had syncronised a London rendezvous so that after nine years our family, split up as a consequence of the political upheaval of 1971, could be together again for a few days. We spent Christmas with Didi (Amiti) and her family at their house in Farnham, Surrey. She is the poet in the family and had published some of her poems including "The Solitary Crane". She also won the first prize in the Kensington and Chelsea Poetry Competition and a recommendation for a poem called "The Walk". For the New Year, Didi's sons by her first marriage, Noel and Michael, my younger sister Moitri and her husband Angus (Lt. Col. John Angus Hume, OBE), who had opted for Pakistan at partition in 1947, and their daughter Ina joined us in London.

We have been celebrating the New Year ever since I can remember. My mother used to ensure that the plum pudding would appear with a blue flame and that it had ensconced in it the traditional ring, coin and thimble. There would be chocolates, and crackers that we pulled: a bang and lo and behold there was the gift within – a ring, a whistle, or a brooch. Now, on the evening of 31 December 1980 the three groups from Bristol, Rangamati and Islamabad, all went in separate taxis to Trafalgar Square. Lots of people were milling around in festive mood. It was good to see the staid English indulging in a bit of Yuletide fun and frolic. On the way back from Trafalgar Square we had to trudge along endlessly in the cold as no taxis were available for quite some time.

The joyous crowd at Trafalgar Square reminded me of New Year's Eve, 1964. With an American friend I had gone off to Times Square a good hour before

midnight to experience at first hand the annual feature, unique in the world, of humanity going joyously berserk as the huge clock there struck the midnight hour. My friend and I were swept away in a human tidal wave, in a swirl of warmth and gaiety, all over the place. It was a gorgeous experience. That year, 1964, it had been a particularly cushy session at the UN because the General Assembly had not got down to any committee work due to its preoccupation with the financial crunch. Some countries, and notably the Soviet Union, had decided not to pay their dues because they disapproved of some of the UN Peace- Keeping operations, and the UN's concomitant expenditure. It may safely be said that the organization has not outgrown its habit of perpetually teetering on the verge of bankruptcy, what with a huge unpaid bill from the US, of all countries.

However, by the beginning of the new millennium this aspect had improved. Despite these handicaps and countless vexations Kofi Annan and the UN have been soldiering on earnestly in a world full of woes and strife. On 10 November 2001, addressing the delayed General Assembly Session on account of the World Trade Centre bombings on 11 September, Kofi Annan expressed his appreciation for having received most of the outstanding financial dues from member states. He said that the financial condition of the UN, as a consequence, was now more stable. The Nobel Committee awarded Kofi Annan and the UN the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001 for their indefatigable efforts, and achievements. They certainly deserved a pat on the back.

After breakfast on 2 January 1981, Angus and his son Noel returned to Bristol while Moitri and their little daughter Ina stayed on with us. That evening some of us went to see Rex Harrison give a splendid performance as Professor Henry Higgins in "My Fair Lady." On 4 January, the Hill Tracts contingent, consisting of my wife Arati, my eldest son Devasish and my youngest daughter Troya, headed for Heathrow to take a flight back to Dhaka. On the same day the Pakistan segment of the family, comprising my two sons Sivasish (Bunting) and Indrasish (Waiki) and I, also left for Islamabad. Chandra was staying on for a while.

On 20 January, Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President. The following day, after being in detention for 2144 days, 54 American hostages were released by Iran and sent to Algiers, and eight billion dollars worth of frozen assets were returned to Iran by the US. On the same day our pet dog Yuri was given an anti - rabies shot. It was the first and only time I remember our taking in a dog for a pet. In the Hill Tracts, we had cats and sometimes barking or spotted deer and different kinds of birds. My cousin Chiranjib had once kept a python in a huge wooden box with tiny air holes in the veranda of their detached kitchen house. His family, and especially the servants used to be terrified lest it get out of the box, coil itself around and squeeze one to Kingdom come. The python, like his master, was goodnatured and easygoing and did not harm anyone. However, despite his amiable disposition and amicable intentions the python was kept at more than an arm's length. Chiranjib was the first science graduate from the Hill Tracts and the only one for more than a decade. However, he outgrew his taste for weird pets and did not try to emulate mad scientists either.

CHAPTER XII

Meeting Minorities

My son Bunting had a secondhand Volkswagen that he was very fond of driving around in, but the rest of the family comprising growing teenagers and their friends felt we needed another personal car. As Adviser to the President with the status of a Federal Minister, I was entitled to certain facilities including a chauffeur driven car but an official car was, after all, official. We decided to buy a Datsun 120Y. Even in those days prices would shoot up suddenly. On 21 January 1981, we paid an advance, and the price was Rs. 95,000/-. On 25 January, the price was jacked up to Rs. 101,500 plus 3000 for a cassette player.

I was busy attending official functions, dinners, diplomatic receptions, and receiving and seeing off important foreign visitors at the airport. While conforming with international norms, we seemed to overdo this airport bit. My rank and status as Federal Minister continued uninterrupted since December 1971, but about a couple of years earlier, my assignment was changed from Adviser on Tourism to that of Minorities Affairs, since when I had been holding meetings with minority delegations and trying to resolve their difficulties.

Between these engagements and attending office, I managed a few rounds of golf about three or four times a week and an occasional session of bridge at my home and at friends' homes. I had some business interests including a petrol service station, agencies of Suzuki, cement, recruiting, and ceramics. Some businessmen managed these ventures on my behalf with varying degrees of success. Lately, I had begun to feel that life had become somewhat shallow, superficial and stultified. One day I asked to see President Zia, and the call was arranged shortly after. We discussed the possibilities of my serving the country from abroad.

The Murree Brewery at Rawalpindi was established in 1861 and belonged to a Hindu who migrated to India at partition in 1947. At a weekend in February 1981, Minoo P. Bhandara, the majority shareholder and chief executive of the Brewery invited some diplomats and me for bridge at his home. Minoo used to hold bridge parties at his Murree home as well during the summer weekends. His wife Goshi served up varied and delicious dishes, and the company at bridge was usually congenial. After I left for Argentina in October 1981, he succeeded me as Adviser for Minorities Affairs. Later on, he was elected to the National Assembly from the minority seat for Buddhists, Parsis, Sikhs, Bahais and Kalash. In the 10 October 2002 elections, he was elected to the National Assembly on a reserved seat for minorities (based on proportional representation). This Parsi gentleman's house is situated just opposite the old President's office, which actually used to be the house of the General Manager of Murree Brewery. President Ayub Khan had taken it over and offered a rent, which Minoo said he had declined. In General Zia's time, Minoo informed me,

he received ten annas value out of 16 annas (the old rupee consisted of 16 annas) for the property. This was due to then Finance Minister (and later President) Ghulam Ishaq Khan's less than generous attitude, although President Zia was willing to pay him proper compensation for the property, he implied, though he did not say so in so many words.

One evening at a weekend there was a biggish dinner-dance party at the house of an Indonesian friend, Husnaputra, who worked for one of the UN agencies here. He was a home body and a quiet type but his wife was a votary of the good life. Dinner-dances were a popular form of entertainment in Islamabad from the early 1970s but tapered off in the Zia regime. In fact, in a futile effort to stave off the raucous opposition demanding re-elections at the fag end of his innings in 1977, Bhutto outlawed alcohol and night clubs and made Friday the weekly holiday.

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Raja Tridiv Roy: With representative of Minorities at Karachi.

CHAPTER XIII

Ranjit Singh and the Kohinoor

One of Governor General Lord Auckland's sisters, Fanny Eden, in "Tigers, Durbars and Kings," as reproduced by an eminent columnist Hafizur Rahman, penned some amusing and incisive observations in the premier English newspaper 'Dawn'. Hafizur Rahman says, "the vignettes about Ranjit Singh are taken from that part of the book which deals with Lord Auckland's stately march to the Punjab to consolidate British - Sikh friendship."

The first encounter with an aspect of Ranjit Singh's personality takes place a few miles this side of Ferozepur. "We came over dreadful roads," writes Fanny and continues, "I hope Ranjit's roads will be better, though he thinks road-making is a foolish English custom, since roads only serve to show your enemies the best way into your country. He sends every evening a hundred pots of sweetmeats which make the servants exceedingly happy." On the camp that Ranjit Singh was to occupy, Fanny says, "Ranjit has sent forward six hundred gardeners to make a garden around his tent, as it is likely that he will be kept there for ten days."

A few days before the formal meeting with Ranjit Singh his son Kharak Singh called to meet Lord Auckland and his sisters. Fanny says of him, "Ranjit does not like Kharak Singh, his heir, which shows his usual discernment, for by all accounts he is little better than an idiot in manner." A great durbar for the Maharajah was held by Lord Auckland. "We received him in the outer tent," writes Fanny Eden, "and he sat down on the sofa between us with his legs tucked up. He is very little, with a long white beard. He does not wear a single jewel, but some of his favourites are covered with them and their dresses are perfectly magnificent."

The Governor General and his entourage made a courtesy call on the Maharajah across the Sutlej where he was encamped. The river was crossed on elephants going over a boat bridge. "The approach to the tent was beautiful. They are surrounded by a large enclosure of scarlet and embroidered cloth, the tents themselves made of shawls and embroidered cashmere, and all the chiefs covered in jewels and armour and shawl drapery." Then, "I was taken to a silver chair at the entrance of the tent where George and Ranjit Singh were sitting. We were in a kind of open tent with silver pillars. It was soon filled with chiefs and nautch girls. Ranjit had a low silver table placed before him and two large branch candle sticks on the floor by it. The table was covered with gold bottles and cups and some specimens of Sikh cookery, spiced balls of meat etc. The composition he calls wine is like burning fire, much stronger than brandy, and his great delight when he sets in to be gay is to make people drink it."

The Maharajah and the Governor General saw a review of 10,000 troops, which were going to Kabul. The moment he got near the troops he (Ranjit Singh) was like a child with a new plaything. He rode up the whole line, nearly three miles, examining them all." The next evening, Lord Auckland gave a return nautch party for the Maharajah ... "Captain Cunningham, who was laying it on, complained that the earthenware oil lamps were not enough, being only 51,000. The English party had their own band play after some time, but Ranjit Singh had it stopped and asked for the nautch girls to sing again."

About the review Fanny Eden records, "All our people were in astonishment at their state of discipline and very surprised at the way in which they performed their manoeuvres. I have a notion from what I can gather that our review was a remarkably poor business compared to them." Speaking of the lavish hospitality, Lord Auckland's sister in her journal writes, "I don't know how many hundreds of baskets of fruits and vegetables Ranjit sent to our camp today."

The entire party halted at the Shalimar Gardens, which Fanny describes as "Remains of magnificence, but everything going into decay." She is shocked to record that her brother was getting rather fond of Ranjit Singh's drink parties. "He was telling George how very sad it was that he had not even one wife, for the Sikhs had sometimes twentyfive. George said that in England they sometimes found one more than they could manage. At which Ranjit answered that if the women were troublesome they beat them. I said I wish he would not tell the Lord Sahib this, which made him laugh violently." Her entry reads. "Yesterday we saw a review of Ranjit's bodyguard. They all rode past us. Ranjit's own horse being led first, his favourite among them – a living mass of emerald estimated at 36 lacs of rupees, or 300,000 pound sterling – and he begged George if he fancied any horse to take it as it stood. But he didn't."

"We have been to the palace to see a select number of Mrs. Ranjit's. In a smaller court we found him (George) and Ranjit at a private durbar. Ranjit was looking very feeble and very ill. We were led off by Kharak Singh and Heera Singh to the ladies apartment. Two of the ayahs met us at the door and smeared us with attar. The ranees were all young, one of them really beautiful and very fair, the others rather humdrum. The principal one is a monster of fat. They had enormous nose rings, their foreheads almost hid with jewels, silver gauze veils, tinselly tunics and very tight trousers. Kharak Singh informed us three times that his own mother was dead, and Heera Singh said there were many more wives in the other rooms – these ones were all legally married. They asked a great number of childish questions, and laughed violently when they took courage to look at us. We could not make out what their amusements are. I fancy they sleep away a great deal of their time."

When the Governor General's party left Lahore, in five days they were outside Ranjit Singh's dominions, Sher Singh escorting them to the frontier. On Ranjit Singh's death at the age of 59, in June 1839, the Kingdom was reduced to

chaos. Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Heera Singh in turn all died violent deaths, and the empire was finally annexed and absorbed into British India in 1849.

In "Ranjit Singh" Khushwant Singh writes, "The end came on the evening of June 27, 1839." Then again, "Having arrived at the funeral pile made of sandalwood, the corpse was placed upon it. Rani Guddan sat down by its side and placed the head of the deceased on her lap; while the other ranis with seven slave girls seated themselves around – with every mark of satisfaction on their countenances. The last prayers were said by members of all communities, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs .... At the time fixed by the Brahmins, Koonwar Khurruk Singh set fire to the pile and the ruler of the Punjab with four ranees and seven slave girls was reduced to ashes." Amid further pomp and ceremonies the collective "ashes were conveyed by slow stages to be immersed in the Ganges at Hardwar. All along the 300-mile route people came to pay their homage; princes with expensive shawls and salutes of gun; peasants with flowers and their tears."

Christy Campbell gives an interesting account of the life of Maharaja Duleep Singh (1838-93), the last of the Sikh Kings, which also includes the intrigues and power politics that ensued immediately after the death of Ranjit Singh. At his funeral pyre four of his queens and seven slave girls immolated themselves in the act of *sati*.

According to Christy Campbell in "The Maharajah's box," the war ended on 10 February 1846, with the help of traitors like Tej Singh. Duleep Singh the fourth acknowledged son of Ranjit Singh was born of Rani Jindan on 6 September 1838. A council was set up consisting of Sikh Sardars who ruled in the name of that minor, Maharajah Duleep Singh. Duleep Singh was put in the care of Dr. John Login and taken to Delhi and subsequently to London.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) was the last independent King of this entire region, the Punjab. This Sikh empire, in the early 19th century, extended from the Sutlej River to Kabul. It also included Jammu and Kashmir. After the annexation by the British, a few years after the death of Ranjit Singh who was an ally, the British sold Jammu and Kashmir to Raja Gulab Singh for a sum of sixtyeight lakh rupees.

Maharaja Duleep Singh was the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Maharani Jindan. He was the last King of the Punjab. He ascended the throne in Lahore in 1843 at the age of five. His mother Maharani Jindan and her brother constituted the regency. After Punjab's annexation in 1849 Duleep was sent to the UP (United Provinces) where he converted to Christianity. Subsequently he was sent to England where he was given an estate in Suffolk. Maharaja Duleep Singh later married an Egyptian (Coptic) Christian at Alexandria. They had a daughter named Bimba Jindan who, according to an unconfirmed Pakistani source, lived in Lahore and died there on 10 March 1975. There is an interesting if somewhat intriguing account of Duleep's life in Christy Campbell's absorbing book, "The Maharajah's Box" published in the year 2000. Patrick French of the *Sunday Times* says of the book, "An extraordinary tragic and at times almost fantastical tale."

The fabulous diamond Koh-i-Noor acquired by Ranjit Singh in 1809 from the fugitive Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk, deposed ruler of Afghanistan, as a guarantee of safety, was passed down to Duleep Singh, his young son, on the death of the 'Lion of Lahore'.

After the Sikh army rebellion, Lord Dalhousie, then Governor General, annexed the Punjab, deposed the young Maharaja and thus the fabulous Koh-i-noor was first viewed by the British conquerors in 1849. Lady Dalhousie, wife of the Governor General had herself made a special small silk bag in which Lord Dalhousie placed the diamond, after signing a receipt in the presence of the Board of Administration and Sir Henry Elliot, K.C.B., Secretary to the Government of India on 7 December 1849. The Governor General sailed on 6 April 1850 on the Royal Navy 'steam-sloop.' The Koh-i-Noor "was placed aboard HMS Medea in great secrecy." The diamond was sewn into a secret pocket on a reinforced waistband, which was then chained around the Governor General's neck – one of the more peculiar settings in the jewel's history. The diamond was brought ashore in such secrecy that custom officers were kept ignorant lest they charged import duty.

The Koh-i-noor was put on show at the Great Exhibition of 1851 but the public found it insufficiently sparkling and so, in a signal and entirely calculating act, it was recut and polished (the Duke of Wellington started the diamond cutter) and set into the Queen's tiara. What the British Empire could appropriate it could also chop down and buff up at will — for that, after all, was the significance of the diamond in imperial eyes. As Lord Dalhousie wrote to Queen Victoria: "The Koh-i-noor may be regarded as an historical symbol of conquest in India, and the Governor-General rejoices that it found its fitting rest in Your Majesty's crown."

An article in "The Times" by Ben Macintyre under the heading "A glittering history and rough diamonds" as it was reproduced in a Pakistani newspaper "The News" of 8 April 2002, has this to say:

> Of all the clashing symbols accompanying the Queen Mother to the grave, none shines more brightly and ironically than the Koh-i-noor, the great diamond set in the royal crown placed upon her coffin: 108 carats of bloodstained jewellery, fought over by Afghan, Persian, Indian and Sikh, recently claimed by the Taleban, smuggled into Britain past customs officers by 19th century colonial servants, and cut up by Queen Victoria in a brilliant PR exercise to bedeck her Empire and dazzle her subjects in accordance with a philosophy of which the late Queen Mum was, herself, the last living ornament.
>
> The Koh-i-noor is a priceless reminder of the furious historical feuding of Central Asia, of murder, treachery and skulduggery, and the complex political legacy of empire in that region: how appropriate, then, that it should sit on the royal coffin under the mournful gaze of thousands, as the Royal

Marines are arriving in Afghanistan to attempt, once more, to sort out the mess.

The diamond was set in the crown the Queen Mother wore for the Coronation of her husband, King George VI, in 1937. According to superstition (and, more importantly, according to canny Victorian spin-doctors) the gem carries a Hindu curse: "Whoever owns this diamond will own the world but will also know its misfortunes. Only God or a woman can wear it with impunity." The first clause of the curse reaffirms imperial power; the second, while implying a similarity between divinity and monarchy, made it possible for Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother to wear it without fear of being struck by lightning.

In fact, the curse of the Koh-i-noor seems more likely to invite back-stabbing by close relatives than a sudden, lethal act of God. Mined in the 12th century in southern India, the diamond was first documented in 1306, when it was believed to have been taken north. In the 16th century the Mogul Emperor Babur, celebrated for the great gardens he constructed in Kabul, had the stone set into his peacock throne and was the first of many to attempt to put a price on it: the rock, the Emperor declared, "is worth the value of two and a half days' food for all the people in the world"; later estimates still put its value at "half the daily expense of the whole world".

The later Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal saw his sons fight ferociously over the succession, and ended his days as a prisoner of one of them. The story goes that when the Moguls were defeated by the Persians in 1736, the conquering Nadir Shah was tipped off by a disgruntled member of the Mogul *harem* that the Emperor was keeping something under his hat. Shah slyly offered to exchange turbans with the Emperor, a victory ritual that could not be refused, and as the defeated ruler unwound his headgear, out fell the diamond. Shah – a pretty rough diamond himself – is said to have held the vast lump (then 188 carats) up to the light and declared: 'Koh-i-noor', which is Persian for 'Mountain of Light'.

After this, the curse kicked in with a vengeance. Shah was murdered in his tent; his son Adil was blinded and deposed by another son, who was also subsequently deprived of the throne and his sight; and so on. One of Shah's generals took the stone to Kabul, where it became a coveted heirloom of the Afghan monarchy (whose succession traditions were just as violent as those of the Persians), until another royal claimant fled for safety to the Punjab, taking the Koh-i-noor with him and presenting it to the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

CHAPTER XIV

Gujranwala, Nankana Sahib, Karachi and Lahore

On 9 February 1981, the day of Basant (Spring), I left by road for Lahore in the morning. We had sandwiches and *tikka* at Gujranwala, a big town 42 miles before Lahore on the Grand Trunk Road. It is noted for its kebabs, and for producing important persons from history. Ranjit himself a son of the chief, at 18 conquered Lahore from here.

Being Basant, we saw many kites in the skies. It is celebrated in Lahore and elsewhere with kite flying. I had dinner at my friend Syed Afzal Agha's house. Born in an upper crust Kashmiri family of Srinagar he had qualified as a lawyer and was a Naval Officer when he was selected for the Indian Civil Service in 1945, after world war II ended in August. In the 1950s he had been posted to Fort Sandeman and to Loralai Agencies in Balochistan as Political Agent. In the beginning of 1957 Afzal Agha was transferred to the Chittagong Hill Tracts as Deputy Commissioner. After the Hill Tracts Agha served as Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong, then Chief Secretary of West Pakistan and still later as Chief Secretary of the Punjab.

Balochistan, by far the largest province territorially, is the sparsest in population, and 96% of its territority is governed by the laws of the various tribes under a loose government supervision. Only 4% of Balochistan has regular police and civil administration. The adjoining North West Frontier Province (NWFP) has a population of 177,43,645 and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have 317,6331 constituting 18% of the whole Province. In area the FATA is 27,200 sq km and constitutes 36.5% of the Frontier Province, which is 74,521 sq km. Customary Laws and traditions apply in the FATA. The writ of the Government of Pakistan is only loosely applicable, unlike the provinces of Punjab and Sindh.

On 10 February, I attended a meeting of Christians, Hindus, Parsis, and Bahai's. I also visited a Gurdwara (Sikh temple) near the Samadhi (tomb) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, where the visiting Indian Sikhs held a meeting. The Pakistan Government every year hosts the Sikhs from India and elsewhere who come on pilgrimage to their principal shrines, at Nankana Sahib beyond Lahore, and Punja Sahib in Hassanabdal, near Taxila. They come on the founder of their religion Guru Nanak's birthday (on the October full moon), and for Baisakhi (12-14 April). Legend has it that an antagonist had rolled down a huge boulder at Guru Nanak (A.D. 1469–1539), the founder of Sikhism, who merely extended his hand and stopped it in its track. His handprint is still on the rock, which has been incorporated in the temple complex of Punja Sahib beside a natural spring, and is a great attraction to the Sikh pilgrims every year during the Baisakhi festival in mid-April.

On 14 February on the Mitali programme of Radio Pakistan I recorded a message to be broadcast to Bangladesh. My message was one of goodwill for

Bangladesh and for the peace and wellbeing of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The hillpeople were suffering greatly and there were many armed encounters between the indigenous Shanti Bahini guerrillas and the Bangladesh military that had taken over the Hill Tracts like an invading army.

On 16 February, Pope John Paul II, who had ascended the papal throne in 1978, arrived at Karachi at 6:20 in the evening. He was on his way to Manila. Along with President Zia I received His Holiness on the tarmac. The President and I had a brief chat with the Pope in the lounge after which the Pope held a mass at the stadium. Half an hour before his arrival at the site of the public meeting someone exploded a bomb but the Pope, undeterred, proceeded to the venue as scheduled. Subsequently, I had the honour of meeting the Pope in Buenos Aires twice more. He is by far the most travelled and best known amongst all the Popes since the apostle Peter, the first Vicar of Christ, and his namesake the first Paul.

All the Popes were not exemplars of virtue. One of them was said to have "bribed his way to the papal throne as Alexander VI" (1492-1503). When he was Cardinal Zodrigo Borgia, he had received a reprimand on 11 June 1460 from Pope Pius II (1408 to 64). "Enea Silvio De Piccolomini was elected Pope, at which he rejected his earlier decadence in favour of a stringent Christianity" (JON E LEWIS, in Private Lives). Pius III succeeded him.

On 17 February, Bunting and Waiki recorded Chakma songs in the Mitali Programme. They would be broadcast before my speech, which was recorded three days earlier, on the Baisakhi Purnima, the full moon festival of May. For the indigenous people of the Hill Tracts, 80% of whom are Buddhists, it is the thrice blessed day of the Buddhist Calendar.

The indigenous Jumma people were not only being denuded of their safeguards but many were being forcibly deprived of their lands. In sheer desperation many young people had joined the guerrilla forces of the Shanti Bahini. There had been an increasing number of armed encounters between them and the armed forces of Bangladesh. Apart from military oppression, a state sponsored large-scale induction of settlers from the plains – with free land, food rations and money – was being carried out. As a result of President Ziaur Rahman's secret meeting with his cabinet and important army highups, a directive was sent to the Chittagong Commissioner. A secret memorandum No. 665-C was issued by the Commissioner, Chittagong Division on 10 June 1980 to all the Deputy Commissioners under him to round up an allotted quota of persons from the plains districts to send them to settle in the Hill Tracts. The order specifies five acres of free land, food rations and other facilities and assistance to be provided to these settlers by the government. The purpose was to change the demographic composition of the Hill Tracts by making the indigenous jumma people a minority in their own land.

The afternoon PIA flight from Karachi to Peshawar on 17 April was hijacked to Kabul, Afghanistan. There were 148 people on board, including Major Tariq

Rahim who had been an ADC to President Bhutto. Young Rahim and his wife were a good looking, sought after young couple at social gatherings. Tariq Rahim was killed ruthlessly, and unnecessarily, even from the hijacker's point of view. (The hijacker was contrite afterwards, according to Raja Anwar's book "The Terrorist Prince", published seventeen years later, where it gives a graphic account of the hijacking).

On 2 March with my Secretary Rahman and Assistant Private Secretary Mukhtar, I left for Karachi by the 10:30 a.m. flight. I stayed at the Qasr-e-Naz Govt. Resthouse (old name Casuarinas) as usual. The following morning, at 10:30 am, I held a meeting with representatives of Hindus and Scheduled Castes. In the afternoon Dewan Lal Chand, a Hindu astrologer, called, and in the evening at 6:00 pm, I received a delegation of lawyers from minority communities in Hyderabad, Sindh to discuss their problems.

On 4 March, Mir Jam Ameer Ali Khan, who would some years later serve as our Ambassador to Mauritius, called on me. He had been a fellow delegate to the UN General Assembly session in 1980. He is a man of great dignity who sometimes likes to use colourful idioms and aphorisms, even in his UN committee interventions.

At 10:30 am. I held a meeting with representatives of the Christian community in Karachi. They later gave a dinner for me at a local restaurant called Shezan. Francis X Lobo, one of the more vocal leaders, was also present.

I visited two Hindu temples, and then proceeded to the Shiv Mandir at Clifton by the sea. It is the Shiv Ratri festival today. It is the night of Shiva, the third of the Hindu Triad and the God of Destruction, the other two being Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Preserver. Bhairava, Birupaksha, Mahadeva, Nataraja, Pashupati, Nilkantha are some of Shiva'a 1008 names. Many famous female divinities and goddesses are his consorts in different epochs. He is, of course, immortal. Durga was created from the power of all the gods including the Triad, in order to destroy Mahishasur, the powerful potentate of the Asuras. The avatar of Vishnu and the hero of the epic Ramayan, Prince Ram also worshipped Durga for empowerment against the demon King Ravan in autumn and as a consequence it became the main Durga Puja. Earlier it was called Basanti Puja. Durga is the most worshipped in Bengal, followed by Lakshmi, Sareswati and Kali. Shiva's consorts, all reincarnations of the same, are Sati, Kali, Parvati and Uma. One particular dance of Shiva with his trident is the Tandav nritya - or pralaya - the Dance of Destruction. He is Nataraja the King of Dance, presiding over the cyclic creation and destruction of the Universe. In Kathmandu, Nepal, the statue of Bhairava, another name for Shiva, has his eyes covered because otherwise it portends war or pestilence.

Kartikeya, the handsome and talented bachelor and the dream of women is Shiva's elder son. The much propitiated elephant-headed god of wisdom and success, Ganesh, is the younger. He is actually Parvati's mind-created son. Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu and the goddess of wealth, and Sareswati, consort of Brahma and the goddess of learning, music and the arts, are two of the other important goddesses

in the Hindu pantheon. Each of these has a vehicle: Sareswati's is the swan, Lakshmi's the owl, Kartikeya's the peacock, Ganesh's the rat, Durga's the lion and Shiva's the Bull named Nandi. The Hindus believe in the cyclic succession of the four yugas or epochs, Satya or Krita, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. This Kali (pronounced Koli) is not to be confused with the angry black goddess Kali (pronounced Kahli) with the protruding tongue. She had been slaying left and right and in her angry rampage she trampled upon Shiva, her recumbent husband, and came to her senses. The protruding tongue is a gesture of contrition and remorse.

According to some Hindus, the Kritayuga (or Satyayuga) lasts 1.7 million years, the Treta two million years, Dwapar 864000 years and Kali 432000 years. We are now in Kaliyuga. The universe will self-destruct at the conclusion of the present age. The life span of the universe is merely one day in the life of Brahma. Creation was the result of Ananda (Joy) that Brahma felt. Lila, the play and Maya, Illusion, describe the motivation and sustenance of the universe presided over by Vishnu. Then comes Shiva with his dance of destruction and the universe is destroyed: pralaya. Brahma lives for a hundred years. Brahma, the creator god is not Brahm, which to the Hindu is Ultimate Reality, Suchness, or Tathata. It is the neuter gender of which sages have said, "Not this, not this". "That thou art" sums up the concept of God with a capital G.

Another description is found in "Myths and Legends" by David Bellingham etc., wherein "Measuring the Cosmos provides the key to Hindu cosmology and introduces us to the cyclical theory of the transmigration of souls and the myth of the four ages of Man. The four Ages, or Yugas, are named after four throws of the dice. The Krita Yuga was the perfect age when there were no gods or demons, people were saintly and there was no disease. The Treta Yuga was when sacrifices began and virtue lessened a quarter. The Dwapar Yuga was a decadent age when virtue lessened one half and there came desire, disease and calamities. And the Kali Yuga is the degenerate age when only one quarter of virtue remains and people are wicked. The latter is the age we live in."

"Sources of Indian tradition," edited by T de Bary says: "The ancient mathematicians worked out these four ages spread over 4,320,000 years, and that 1,000 of these periods equals one day of Brahma. At the end of each day (Kalpa), Brahma sleeps for a night of equal length, and before he falls asleep the universe is destroyed by fire and flood and becomes as it was in the beginning. He creates anew when he wakes the next morning. A year of Brahma is 360 Kalpas and he endures for 100 years – and that is half of his existence. After another 100 years of chaos and disorder, a new Brahma will arise to create a new universe, and so the cycle will begin again."

This eternal cycle of creation and destruction is the backdrop to the cycle of birth and death that those who believe in reincarnation must endure. "The atheistic Jains reject the doctrines of a divine creator. However, they believe in metempsychosis and Moksha (Deliverance). For them natural laws provide a more

satisfactory explanation. They believe that the world is not created but is without beginning or end, existing under the compulsion of its own nature. Belief in a creator is considered an evil doctrine and makes no sense because if he were transcendant he would not create, for he would be free; nor if involved in transmigration, for then he would not be almighty."

Then again: "Although the great ascetic philosophy of Jainism rejected much of Hindu thought the two beliefs shared one vision of the cosmos. The emphasis Jains laid on wisdom and teaching preserved and created many important learned texts on mathematics and other objects and also formed a body of popular literature in many different Indian languages.They have produced many beautiful maps of the cosmos, full of measurements and fine details."

It goes on to say, "A popular image of Shiva is that of Lord of the Dance, Nataraj and he is frequently surrounded by a ring of sacred fire. This icon represents his five divine functions: creation, preservation, destruction, revelation (of the concealment of ignorance), and release (from rebirth)."

Buddhists believe that creation and destruction is cyclic and is a manifestation of the Law of Karma, Cause and Effect. That there is no first cause. They do not recognize the Hindu concept of Sat-Chit-Ananda - a threefold unity depicting Ultimate Reality. The Buddhist does not deny Brahma but says he is the first to be created in a new cycle and is not the creator. Being the first he thinks he creates by his desire but creation, existence and dissolution are three successive phases of a ceaseless process called Samsara, the "Wheel of Becoming", inexorable and cyclic. Beyond, the Buddha postulates, is Nirvana. It is a stateless state, unborn, unformed, unbecome, unconditioned, in which there is no going into nor coming out of, neither existence nor nonexistence. Nagarjuna, (150 BC-250 BC) the greatest dialectic thinker after the Buddha and the exponent of the Madhyamika (Middle Path) school, calls it Sunyata, the Plenum Void.

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On 5 March at 10:30 am, I held a meeting with representatives of the Parsi and Bahai communities, the latter a small minority religion that originated in Iran but is now not recognized there. At 7:00 pm, I called on my bridge-playing friend Mohammed Arif.

The Princess of Bahawalpur, Babs Chinoi and G.M. Marri gave a dinner, which I attended. The party was characteristically lavish and well attended. Babs is one of the most popular socialites of Karachi. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, an old cabinet colleague and a top ranking Sindhi leader, was also there. He subsequently married Babs's older sister and also became a Caretaker Prime Minister. He led a delegation to Argentina in the early 1990's. I returned to Islamabad from Karachi at 5:30 in the afternoon on 6 March.

On 9 March, at 4:00 pm, there was the swearing in of 20 Ministers, five Advisers with the rank of Federal Ministers including myself, three Ministers of State, and six Advisers with the rank of Minister of State. Advisers are members of the Cabinet but do not take oath.

On 25 March, with a small group I attended a dinner at Defence Minister Mir Ali Ahmed Khan Talpur's house. He is a direct descendant of the former rulers of Sindh and is the head of the family of the Mirs, a member of the National Assembly, and bitter opponent of Z.A. Bhutto. This scion of Sindh's first family is well over 6 feet tall. In the days when he was in the opposition, in the early 1970s, he was fond of making fiery anti-Bhutto speeches in the National Assembly that used to go down well with many in the press gallery.

On 26 March, I left at 9:00 am, with my sons and my Private Secretary Abdul Rahman Khan, by car for Lahore. We had a picnic lunch on the way. Mukhtar and the bodyguard Allah Ditta (in Pakistani officialese "gunman") were already at Chamba House.

I had dinner at a friend's place and then proceeded to our family friend Afzal Agha's house. Bunting and Waiki are staying with Agha's daughter Shireen and her banker husband Mohammed Mian Soomro.

On 27 March, after lunch at his place, I played golf with Afzal Agha. We had dinner at Shandoor restaurant with Anwar Sher and his wife Arifa and some other friends; then Anwar Sher stood us to ice cream at Shezan. The city of Lahore is Known for its varieties of cuisine and is an ancient centre of culture. On 28 March at 12:00 noon, I gave an interview to a newspaper reporter from the 'Azadi' of Gujranwala. At 5:00 pm attended a reception by Rev. Alexander John Malik, Bishop of the Church of England at Lahore. His bishopric is vast in extent, including Gilgit, he informed me. The Christians in Pakistan are a united community despite their various Church groupings and denominations, of which the Catholics represent the majority and their philanthropic contributions to society especially in health and education are immeasurably beneficial, particularly to the poorer people of all religions.

On 29 March, I visited the ancient and famous Sikh shrine at Nankana Sahib, some miles out of Lahore. On 30 March I laid a Chadar and floral wreath at Data Durbar at the mausoleum of the saint Hazrat Data Ganj Buksh, the most renowned shrine in Lahore. On 31 March from 10:00 am, I met delegations of Christians at Chamba House, and later leaders of the Hindu communities. Around noon we left for Islamabad. One of the law students of the Punjab University rang to say Chandra had passed the final law examinations in the 2nd Division.

On 1 April, I attended a bridge dinner at the home of the Salams at Attock Oil Complex, Rawalpindi. On 7 April I recorded the Chakma Bizu festival speech at the radio station on the Mitali programme, to be broadcast on the 13th. Chandra came

back from England on 12 April, the day of Mul Bizu, which is celebrated in the Hill Tracts every year, and in most of South and Southeast Asia under various names.

I visited Lahore again. As compared with Islamabad Lahore is drier, hotter and less verdant. It is, however, one of the most ancient cities of the sub-continent, and Islamabad perhaps the newest. In the morning met minority leaders at Phailbus' house. Mira Phailbus is the popular and much respected Principal of the prestigious Kinnaird College for Girls, of many years' standing. Theo is an engineer by profession and a senior government officer. He has a fabulous and varied collection of items from philately to numismatics, photographs of film actors and actresses to old posters, art objects and icons, and other religious and secular memorabilia.

At 5:30 pm, I had tea with 15 Christian educationists. They are much perturbed due to the notices issued to them by the Education Department to vacate the teachers' and pastors' houses, which they have been occupying for years. All this is the result of government's recent nationalization of educational institutions, most of which belong to Christians. I had the expulsion orders rescinded after strenuous effort.

In the evening I called on the Punjab Governor Lt. Gen. Ghulam Jilani Khan at Governor's House. We discussed problems of the minorities, particularly those of the Christians as a consequence of nationalization of their educational institutions. Then I had dinner at S.M. Zafar's house. He was Law Minister in Ayub Khan's Cabinet at one time. Since 1978 he is also the Chairman of the Human Rights Society of Pakistan. He informed me that they had already written to Amnesty International and to President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh about human rights abuses against Chakmas and others in the Hill Tracts.

On 24 April, at 11 am, I presided over the oath taking ceremony of the new students union of the Government College for Women in Satellite Town, Rawalpindi.

On 27 April, I presided over the morning session of the Minorities Advisory Council meeting at Islamabad Hotel. The Minister, Nawab Muhammad Abbas Abbasi presided over the second session. He is the Nawab of Bahawalpur, the largest native state that had opted for Pakistan, save for Kalat. Its capital city is 500 km (310 miles) south of Islamabad. The Nawab had quite a collection of Rolls Royces at his palace. Later, I made the concluding remarks at the end of the conference.

The Nawab generally wore an achkan, also called sherwani, the knee length formal coat worn in the subcontinent with white churidar breeches or shalwar, baggy, soft, thin cotton trousers, and a red fez with a tassel that was quite distinctive. He was quite aware that nowadays nobody, (except the renowned Nawabzada Nasrulla Khan, leader of the combined opposition in perpetuity, even in 2003) wore the headgear that had become obsolete after Kemal Ataturk revolutionized Turkey. The Nawab told me that once the Maharaja of Patiala's tailor by mistake had got a pocket in the Maharaja's achkan wrong, but everyone took it to be a new fashion and soon

everybody had their pockets wrong, so it became a la mode – and right. And the Maharaja of Jodhpur had designed the riding breeches that took his name. Nawab Abbasi was a charming man, urbane and witty, and quite profound as a thinker on Islamic tenets and their interpretations. He was at the same time liberal and broadminded.

While on the subject of minorities, a letter almost two decades later written by a Pakistani Muslim to the editor of the daily 'Dawn' dated 3 July 1998, illustrates the need to set up a high powered autonomous Minority Commission with the authority of an ombudsman, under the chairmanship of a Supreme Court Judge, as I have been advocating for some time.

"Rights of Minorities"

> The second most important part of the historic 1940 Lahore Resolution, often not quoted, reads: "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for (the) minorities in these units and in the regions (of the new country) for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguard shall be specifically provided in the Constitution for them and other minorities for their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

In 1998, it will be only fair to ask the large majority in Pakistan as to why does it not protest against the continued violation of the rights of the minorities.

The founder of the nation, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was very clear in his mind with regard to the separation of religion from the business of the State. In his famous speech to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August, 1947 he said:

> "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State."

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As citizens there are no differences between Muslims and non-Muslims, both are equal citizens of the State. From the beginning of the creation of Pakistan there has always been the system of joint electorate, except for one short period in 1954 in the Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan when governments were formed and dismissed in rapid succession, making a mockery of parliamentary democracy. In the 1956, the 1962 and the (consensus) 1973 constitutions of Pakistan, that is in all of them, the joint electorate system prevailed.

President Zia-ul-Haq, however, introduced separate electorates in Pakistan, against the wishes of the minorities and without proper consultation with the majority. Consequently, seats were reserved on the basis of religion. For example, one seat was allocated in the 237 seat National Assembly of Pakistan to a whole range of religions and communities: Buddhists, Parsis, Sikhs, Bahais, and Kalash. The whole of Pakistan was the constituency for a candidate contesting this seat, with the constituents scattered all over the nation. Apart from all these incongruities, the main point is the disenfranchisement of the religious minorities, in itself a violation of human and fundamental rights.

The largest minority groups are the Hindus and the Christians, and the total number of minorities, according to the census, is about 3 per cent of the whole. At the time of partition in 1947 the minorities accounted for about 15% of the population of the whole and a sizeable segment, almost 25%, of the population of East Pakistan. The white in the Pakistan flag represents them. The size of the white strip in the flag may have also shrunk in practice, though without any formal resolution or orders.

In 1972, as Minister for Minorities Affairs, I had become aware of many of their problems and their demands. I had succeeded in creating an annual fund of Rs. 20 lakhs, back in the early 1970s, (50 lakhs in 1981), to be spent exclusively for the minority communities. Some years later, in the 1990s I was told that some unspent portions were allowed to lapse at the end of each financial year, and I had then recommended that the amount should be non-lapsable and carried over at the end of each financial year.

Two of the most common demands from the various minority communities all over the nation were reservation of seats in educational institutions, and quotas in government service. Another problem they had, which the provincial administrations had to deal with fairly and firmly, was the incidence of girls being kidnapped and converted to Islam, often under duress, and without the approval of the parents. Sometimes the girl was produced before a magistrate but under dire threats, so her deposition was not necessarily genuine or voluntary. Also, the girl was usually a minor.

Quotas had been provided for the minorities in certain educational institutions, and reserved seats in the National and Provincial assemblies. There were also job quotas for the Scheduled Castes but they were often not filled up. Many have complained of being disenfranchised and made sub-citizens, and want the restoration of the Joint Electorate System. President Musharraf reintroduced the joint electorate system in the October 2002 elections, with 10 seats provided for the minorities in the National Assembly and some seats in the Provincial Assemblies, on the basis of proportional representation. Whether they can or do play an effective role remains to be seen. Most of the minority groups prefer reservations but not on the proportional system as they are nominees of the political parties and not representatives of the minorities as expressed by the voters in the exercise of their franchise. J. Salik, a

former federal minister and Christian MNA, has taken the matter to court. As a result of the 10 October elections, the Muslim League (Q) and a coalition under the Prime Ministership of Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali was sworn in by President General Pervez Musharraf on 23 November 2002. The present cabinet comprises 14 ministers, 7 Ministers of State, and 2 Advisers. 2 more ministers were taken in on 4 June 2003. So far there is no minority representation in the Federal or in any of the Provincial Cabinets.

In the Quaid-i-Azam's time the minorities were not excluded from the right of adult suffrage and he also had a minority minister in his cabinet. In fact the first President of the Constituent Assembly also was a member of the minority community. There have been some famous judges too. Earlier, Muslim kings of undivided India like Sher Shah Suri had a number of able Hindu generals in his campaigns. In the Mughal times Akbar had Raja Todar Mall as his revenue minister among others, and his nine gems comprised persons of different faiths. Even the conservative Alamgir Aurangzeb (1618-1707) had Hindu generals in his army, even in command of forces deployed against the frontiers around Kabul as well as Hindus holding high civilian posts.

In present day Pakistan it is desirable that ministers from the minority communities be included in the Federal as well as in each of the Provincial Governments. In addition there should be committees of influential persons from the majority as well as minority communities at the district level. They should meet regularly to prevent, or tackle local inter communal and sectarian discord, and advise the administration on problems of the minority communities. But above all, it is desirable to set up a high-powered Minorities Commission under a Supreme Court Judge. It would recommend comprehensive measures for safeguarding minority interests and for promoting their welfare. The Commission should also be empowered with executive and judicial authority so as to ensure against discrimination, and to provide redress.

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CHAPTER XV

Traumas of the Chakmas

Mahfuzul Haque in "Ethnic Insurgency and National Integration" writes on page 80, "Misunderstanding between the Bangladesh government and the tribal people arose immediately after independence. Bengali Freedom Fighters killed tribal people of Khagrachari, Dighinala and Barkal." And on page 81, "Widespread repression and atrocities during Mujib regime were committed by Rakkhi Bahini [para-military security force of the post-independent government] against the tribal people." And again he says, "At a rally at Rangamati Sheikh Mujib declared that all tribal people would be known as Bengali and would have no other identity."

Since then, the indigenous jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts have suffered untold miseries. In Parliament the constitution was passed ignoring the Chittagong Hill Tracts and its people totally. Manabendra Narayan Larma, whose pleas had been ignored, said, "This Constitution does not recognize the existence of other national communities in Bangladesh ..... It makes no mention about the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The British had given recognition to our separateness, the 1962 Constitution of Pakistan duly recognized our separate status ..... the framers of the Constitution have forgotten my land, my people ..... We have been deprived of our rights, the country has become independent, but we continue to have a cursed life ....." (Parliament Debates 25.10.1972: 292-295).

In point of fact the Central and Provincial Legislatures had never before exercised any jurisdiction over the Hill Tracts until 1954. Before India was partitioned the Hill Tracts had been an Excluded Area and in the Pakistan Constitution of 1956 also it remained an Excluded Area and in the 1962 Constitution it retained its separate status as a Tribal Area. According to the rules the Chiefs formed the government's Advisory Council and they had to be consulted on all important matters affecting the Hill Tracts. Despite Manabendra Narayan Larma's eloquent pleadings in the Bangladesh Parliament, no constitutional safeguards were provided in the new Constitution. Larma led a delegation to Sheikh Mujib on 15 February 1972, with four demands including the retention of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation 1900, and special laws, but his demands were rejected. His plea for the retention of the powers of the Chiefs was accepted but in practice their advice was disregarded unless it coincided with government's particular interests.

Encountering only rejection from the Bangladesh leadership and parliament, and as a consequence of Mujib's public utterance denying even their ethnic identities, the indigenous people were even more hurt and angered. Predictably the Awami League candidates were defeated in the parliamentary elections. Having failed to acquire constitutional safeguards, facing renewed onslaughts on their culture and on their lands, the various indigenous peoples under the leadership of the Larma brothers

formed the PCJSS Party on 7 March 1972 and later on 7 January 1973 the Shanti Bahini (Peace Force). The oppression and violence increased and the Jumma hillpeople realized that cultural and even physical extinction as a people was inevitable, and not in the distant but in the immediate future. The Larma brothers went underground. They had no option. To defend themselves the people launched the guerrilla war against the Bangladesh government.

On orders from the Ziaur Rahman government the directives that were issued by the Commissioner to Deputy Commissioners of the Chittagong Division marked "secret," were at first denied by the then Government of Bangladesh, and even the existence of such a policy. However, such a large transfer of population could not be hidden from the world at large. When confronted with the evidence, the government had no word of explanation, nor one of contrition. This gross attempt to forcibly appropriate their lands and drive away the indigenous Jumma people, and thereby to change the demographic composition of the Hill Tracts by converting the overwhelming majority population into a minority, demonstrates a mediaeval mindset similar to those of the fascists whose atrocities have shamed all mankind in the not too distant past.

In consonance with the secret policy, "settlers" from the plains were inducted into the Tracts by providing them with free land, money, cattle, food ration and other incentives. Besides this nefarious policy of dispossessing the indigenous people of even their personal registered settled lands, as well as ancestral common lands which are the property of the indigenous people and regulated by their Chiefs and Headmen, there was also another ugly dimension to their strategy. With the help and assistance of the Armed Forces, a great number of whom had been posted in the Tracts, "settlers" were instigated into forcibly occupying cultivated lands of the Jumma, sometimes harvesting ripened crops, and resorting to vile terror tactics such as arson, plunder and rape. The objective evidently was to de-populate the Tracts of its indigenous population through the starkest form of State terrorism.

During Pakistan days there was no government sponsored induction or infiltration by plainsmen. Mahfuzul Haque in "Ethnic Insurgency and National Integration," says: "In mid-1979 late President Ziaur Rahman took decision to settle landless families in the sparsely populated areas of the hills. The decision was construed by the tribal leaders as a government attempt to change population pattern of the hills. In February, 1980, truckloads of poor Bengali families mainly from northern Bangladesh poured into the Hill Tracts. They were attracted by the government scheme to provide five acres of hilly land, four acres of mixed lands, and 2.5 acres of paddy land for each newly settled Bengali family."

In December 1980, the government of military dictator Ziaur Rahman had the Disturbed Areas Bill introduced, smoothing the way for further killings of the indigenous people of Hill Tracts. Even in Sheikh Mujib's time three military cantonments had been set up. In General Ziaur Rahman's time the number of military

personnel was augmented to one soldier for every five civilians. Subsequently, it is believed that the number went up to one soldier to three civilians.

On 28 April 1981, the Guardian of London commented on the "Disturbed Areas Bill" introduced in the Bangladesh Parliament. "That the army and police would be immune from challenge in the courts and could enter any premises without warrant. For the parliamentary opposition the Act was seen as sanctioning violation of human rights. Such legislation is indeed extraordinary since even legislation enacted in war time, such as the Defence of India Rules passed during the second world war or the Defence of Pakistan Rules promulgated during 1965 do not provide such powers of shooting to kill as are provided under the proposed Disturbed Areas Act."

I used to receive details of the happenings in the Hill Tracts through regular bulletins from Dr. Ramendu Shekar Dewan from England, who for many years has been the representative of the JSS Party and has been assiduously serving the cause of the oppressed peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts at great personal sacrifice. Besides preparing and sending reports of happenings in the Hill Tracts to overseas Chakma and other Jummas, he also spoke on their behalf at the annual UN Sub-Committee meetings on Human Rights at Geneva.

According to Amnesty International's report, "violent army operations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts began in March 1980." While I was in London for a few days on one of my journeys between Islamabad and Buenos Aires, I was invited to lunch at the House of Lords by a panel of British Parliamentarians from both Houses and from both the major political parties. We discussed the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which was then pretty grim with the government sponsored induction of plainspeople and appropriation of the indigenous people's lands and the exodus of thousands of the latter who had taken shelter in makeshift refugee camps in Tripura in India. My objective was to help achieve a peaceful and negotiated settlement between the guerrillas and the Bangladesh government and the return of the refugees to their homes in honour and dignity and the restitution of their lands to them.

One of the most desirable and necessary conditions was the repatriation of the inducted plainsmen back to their places of origin. The international community too was favourable to this idea and was willing to help financially as well, but the Bangladesh authorities were not too keen. The British parliamentarians wished to help resolve these problems but their efforts did not make much headway.

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CHAPTER XVI

May-October 1981

Once, in the early 1970s, Sardar Iqbal had held a bridge dinner for me at the Flashman's Hotel in Rawalpindi. There we were at half a dozen tables of rubber-bridge. Dr. Ploil, who cuts his cigarettes in two in order to smoke less, was also there. But so was Saiyan Chaudhry who was regaling us with a song and dance sequence. *Mujras* and bridge have one thing in common, they last hours, though bridge and dancing crooners have never been known to combine. Trust the unpredictable Sardar Iqbal to mix the unmixable, regardless of consequences. He was such a delightful character that he got away with his weird combinations.

The talented and comely Saiyan (the 'n' is silent) Chaudhry danced and sang and we watched her as we wrestled with the problem of defending a contract of four spades vulnerable doubled when our partnership had a combined total of seven points including a singleton jack of spades; or as declarer at six diamonds with two aces missing, one of them being the diamond. Imagine a simultaneous concentration on a gorgeous woman singing her heart out and bestowing melting glances, with an occasional shimmy and a shake, and an excruciatingly delicate choice between a lead of trumps and left hand opponent's second suit. If Jeeves had been around he would undoubtedly have called it a "concatenation of circumstances" and suggested a change of venue — to Aunt Ameena's or a relaxing fishing trip to the Kaghan valley. If our attention flagged a bit now and then I hope Saiyan Chaudhry appreciated our predicament and forgave us.

The inimitable Sardar Iqbal of flamboyant tastes was also a good shot, especially in winging down the local partridge known here as Chikor. He would invite friends to play bridge and dine on Chikors, with accompanying red wine. Apart from lavish dinners, expensive and liberal quantities of alcoholic beverages used to be served at some weddings and other social occasions. However, drinking in Pakistan was banned by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the time of his political death throes in a futile attempt to appease the extremists among the combined opposition, a little before he was deposed by General Zia-ul-Haq on 5 July 1977. However, non-Muslims are allowed to take out permits.

On 1 May 1981, I attended Sardar Shaukat Hayat's house warming party on Margalla Road opposite the little green domed mosque. It is very near to No. 248 B, the house rented for me since 1973, opposite the Saidpur Road and next to the Mir of Hunza's house. The Sardar Sahib belonged to the landed gentry and was the son of the pre-partition premier of the Punjab, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan. Sardar Shaukat Hayat was one of the pre-independence era Punjabi politicians of note who became leader of the Council Muslim League, after President Ayub had appropriated the

Muslim League that since 1963 became known as the Convention Muslim League. The third group came to be known as the Muslim League Qasim group.

Sardar Shaukat's family own property around the famed Wah Gardens on the way to Taxila, which I once enjoyed visiting as a guest of the family. The gardens have willows and poplars and plane trees, and a gurgling stream that recalls "The brook", about which the Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson says, "Man may come, and man may go, but I go on for ever." The legend is that while out on a hunt in 1640 the Emperor Akbar had come across this spot and in admiration exclaimed, "Wah!" In Farsi (Persian), which was the Mughal court language, it means "excellent."

At the end of 1973 there used to be a quiz: which capital in the world has no hotel? The answer: Islamabad. We in the Ministry of Tourism had to do a little arm twisting with a little of the carrot as well to induce a Karachi businessman to get us out of this unique, if unsavoury status. Islamabad did have the Sheherzade Hotel, which was run by the enterprising Hasan Amin and his energetic and lively wife Zartaj (Zari), but the Foreign Ministry had taken it over in September 1973 and made it their office.

Later in the evening, after attending the house warming party, I attended Tehmina Imran Khan's fashion show at the poolside of Holiday Inn (that later became the Marriott Hotel). Chandra participated as a model. A programme of classical dances followed.

On 6 May 1981, my bridge playing friend Dr. Ernst Ploil, the Austrian Ambassador, called at the office at 12:00 noon and we discussed the acceleration of the old Malam Jabba ski resort project in Swat under aid from Austria. In the evening there was dinner and dancing at Taufeeq Saigal's place in Rawalpindi, until the early hours. His was one of Pakistan's "twenty-two" families of industrial and financial tycoons that were sometimes lampooned in the press as the main beneficiaries of President Auyb's "decade of development." The Saigals invested their wealth and their enterprise wisely and enjoyed a good relationship with their labourers and employees generally. Until around the turn of the century, the Saigals, and especially the Dawoods, the Adamjees and the Bawanis between them controlled the majority of all commerce and industry in Pakistan.

I came across Saiyan again. She looked as gorgeous. It was at the wedding of Salim the second Prince of Dir with Gina (the Brooke Shields look alike). The Nawab's Rawalpindi home was festooned with lights and he had invited about a thousand guests. Almost half of them were ladies in fabulous get ups and sparkling jewellery, weaving in and out amongst and amidst the men. And this time, despite meandering maidens I listened to Saiyan with almost undivided attention, and with great delight. I remember she wore a blue sari with silver spangles.

No restrictive food laws were in vogue then. It was in the 1990s that some restrictions were placed to cut down on social extravagance and no food could be

served at weddings. In November 2002 the Supreme Court opined that the Federal Government restrictions were wrongly imposed, as it was a provincial matter. The Punjab government has issued some orders specifying items to be served. Restrictions on the number of guests and dishes to be served at weddings are obviously desirable but not a total ban. In the East we often over-spend at weddings and get into debt in the process. This is in addition to dowries that often result in bride burnings and similar other horrendous social malpractices in the subcontinent. It is said that the Holy Prophet of Islam himself gave only a blanket and a few household utensils to his daughter at her marriage. However, many of his followers nowadays are not that austere in their marriage customs and especially in daughter's dowry. The poorest are no exceptions, nor the richer. For the richest of course such expediture does not make a dent in their many-layered shield of gold; a different matter for a daily wage earner or a simple peasant with many daughters, and for all fixed income middle class people.

On 8 May 1981, I motored up to Murree, to the summer residence of the popular Brazilian Ambassador Antonio Carlos Diniz D'Andrada and his charming diplomat wife Cecilia, who constantly shuttled between Brasilia or elsewhere, and Islamabad, during her husband's 12 year tour of duty here (1977-89), the last four as Doyen of the Corps. The Algerian Ambassador and his wife, the Salams of Attock Oil Company, their daughters and son-in-law Sarwar Khan, arrived shortly before one in the afternoon. The non-players left before dark but the bridgers slogged on. When bridge was over, well after 1:00 am, Sardar Iqbal refused to let us drive back to Islamabad in my car. He insisted Sarwar and I accompany him in his. After some resistance we capitulated and Sarwar and I reluctantly entered his car. And said our prayers. He took the steering wheel, although he could hardly steer himself from the house to the car. In consternation our staff watched open mouthed.

The car weaved miraculously down from 7000 to 2000 feet without actually slipping off the edge of a road that was then in a decidedly poorer shape than now. In the wee hours of the morning, Sardar Iqbal dumped Sarwar in the middle of the road at Aabpara, a peripheral shopping area on the outer perimeter of Islamabad. It was totally quiet with nary a living soul, not even a dog, in sight. The staff, in the meantime, being duly impressed by the strange workings of God's ways, had driven home when we reached the outskirts of town, relieved and amazed at our survival.

Despite remonstrances, this fate was meted out to Sarwar because of a supposed mistake or error of judgment, according to Sardar Sahib a deliberate act of sabotage at bridge earlier when he had been his partner. Young Sarwar could not find a taxi at 3 am. This was Islamabad not Buenos Aires where you could get a taxi at any place, any hour. Finally, he trudged three miles of deserted roads and streets to get home. A solitary pre-dawn walk might be helpful to the constitution and provide scope for contemplation and reflection as well. Sarwar did not inform us afterwards if he had benefited from the experience.

A day or two after the bridge party I entered the Argentine-Brazil golf tournament for the departing Nigerian Ambassador at the Bhurban golf course in the hills beyond Murree. The 9-hole links, up amongst scarce meadows and sheer cliffs, between gullies and ridges, is fascinating golf country, even for the redoubtable Scots. A couple of them had once told me so. I won and was presented the cup jointly by Raul Desmaras the Argentine Ambassador and Antonio D'Andrada the Brazilian Ambassador, after a barbecue lunch at the former's summer residence in Murree.

On 11 May 1981, I attended a dinner at Hakim Ali Zardari's house, along with three Ministers from Sindh: Mir Ali Ahmed Khan Talpur, Yousuf Haroon and Ilahi Bux Soomro. Hakim Ali Zardari, MNA (Member of the National Assembly), is the father of Asif Ali Zardari who married Benazir Bhutto, the first Muslim woman in the world to become Prime Minister. Benazir became the elected Prime Minister of Pakistan a second time. Hakim Ali had been a member of the National Assembly also in 1971. He is a pleasant, even jolly, Sindhi businessman who owned a cinema house in Karachi, and was a prolific consumer of paan (betel leaf).

Chandra joined the only English daily in Islamabad, "The Muslim," as a reporter, in the middle of May, when spring flowers are wildly in abundance in Islamabad.

On 19 May, I addressed the Karachi Theosophical Society, one of the oldest of Karachi's liberal institutions. Mrs. Gool Minwala, the well-known Parsi philanthropist and educationist, presided. At the beginning of the meeting Sindhi girls recited the Buddhist "trisaranena", the three remembrances, the Buddha, the Dhamma (Teachings) and the Sangha (Brotherhood of monks). I had once before attended a function of this society on the full moon festival of Vesak in May 1974.

On 8 June, I attended the Indian Ambassador's reception for his Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao, at the Holiday Inn, and on the 10th, the book launching of "Balmeek Jivan Chitan," by Chaman Lal Kandyar. This sizeable group pertains to the Scheduled Castes, which constitutes about 70% of the Hindus in Pakistan. The first mention of Balmiki is of the famous Rishi in whose ashram (hermitage) the banished Sita, wife of King Ram Chandra (usually called Ram), the "avatar" or divine incarnation in the Treta Yuga, had taken refuge, and where Lav and Kush had been born. Balmiki is said to be the author of the Ramayan and being a seer had written the epic even before the events unfolded. The city of Lahore (Lavpur) is believed to have been named after its founder Lav, the elder son of Ram and Sita of the epic Ramayan; and Kasur after Kush, the younger son.

On 12 June, I received a letter from mother. She is the only member of the family that writes letters regularly. At boarding school, I used to look forward so keenly to letters from home. Mother and father both would write regularly every week. I played bridge with Asif Ali, Manager United Bank, at his residence. He comes from a distinguished family of Madras and is a colourful character who plays

the harmonium and sings ghazals as well as modern film songs. His wife is a refined person and holds down a government post.

On 15 June, I played bridge at home after some golf. Later we heard that on this date, in the evening at his home, Blackie Kaka had died of a heart attack in Rangamati. There was lightning and thunder just then. He was father's first cousin, therefore, my second cousin. But in the East such relatives are invariably called uncles. He was a childhood companion and later a wise adviser to my minor son Devasish when he was trying to cope with the turbulent affairs of the Hill Tracts without me. I sent a condolence telegram to Blackie Kaka's wife, Suniti. They were both very close to Arati and me. A day or so later I received a rare telephone call from the family at Rangamati to inform me of Blackie Kaka's death.

Some days later I held a dinner for Taufiq Saigal and Nini at Chakma House, our new house in E-7 sector at the foot of the Margalla Hills. I had started it in 1978 and completed it in 1980. A photojournalist from London, Sarah Errington, came to see me. She is interested in going to the Hill Tracts to study the Mro people. Erwin Siegl, an old friend from the Kaptai Dam project period, arrived and had lunch. He brought letters from my wife, son, and daughter. Devasish sent a telegram informing us that Waiki who is now in Rangamati would arrive in Karachi on 4 July in the morning.

On 25 June, Finance Minister Ghulam Ishaque Khan announced the 1981-82 budget. An increased sum of 50 lakhs has been allocated to the minorities ministry for the Welfare Fund, on the basis of my letter requesting 75 lakhs. I was glad because the increase was substantial even if not to the extent wished for. There was a dinner party at home for about 80 guests.

27 June turned out to be exceedingly hot and stuffy. This June has been the worst since 1972. I played bridge at Sarwar Khan's place at 10:30 am, followed by lunch. He is the only bridge player here I know of who invites for morning bridge at his house. In the evening, with Chandra, Iqbal Ismi's son Asad and his sister Mimi down from their boarding schools for the holidays, we went to Anwar and Rehana Suval's place near the Islamabad Club to see "The coalminer's daughter" on video cassette.

On 1 July, I played a round of golf with Nasser Abbas. Mohammed Mian's brother-in-law, Maliha's husband Sohrab Malik has arranged for his friend to manage my cement agency affairs from today. At 5:30 pm, I went to the President's reception at the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) House in Rawalpindi, where he lives. The Sikh Yatris from India and elsewhere on pilgrimage to Pakistan came to call on the President.

On 4 July, I attended American Independence Day Reception at 12 noon. I was interviewed by Moon, a journalist from Asiaweek.

With the Anwar Suval family and some other friends we all went on a picnic to Ayubia, a tourist spot beyond Murree with a chairlift. It rained there and in Islamabad too, after a long dry spell. In the evening Zaheeruddin Temuri, a civil service friend and his charming Bengali wife Anu, along with his poet sister and brother-in-law, dropped in and stayed on to dinner. In their childhood their family used to get a pension from the British, being direct descendants of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, who was charged with treason and banished to Burma after the 1857 revolt (known as the Sepoy Mutiny by the British and the First War of Independence by the Indians). Bahadur Shah died in exile in Rangoon four years later. He is attributed to having written his own epitaph: "How unlucky Zafar is, for his burial he couldn't even get two yards of earth, in his beloved country." A Reuter's report of an article by Sugita Katyal appeared in "Dawn" on 23 August 2002. It quotes a descendant of the Emperor. "I am proud to belong to the Mughal family," says Begum Umahani. "But when I think of what happened to Bahadur Shah Zafar, I am saddened. Although I was not born then, the punishment he was given breaks my heart." The British did the same with King Theebaw of Burma, exiling him to Ratnagiri in India, where he died as a "prisoner-guest" three decades later. Such actions are prompted by the exigencies of conquest and "empire", and are tragic and unfair to not only the targeted royal individuals but to so many of their direct and indirect dependants as well.

On 6 July, Mahmud Ali's daughter Sheila, good friend of Chandra's, got married to Benjamin Wanahin, a Kenyan student. A Qazi performed the ceremony at the house of Naghma Desulier, a Pakistani girl married to a Frenchman. They all had lunch here including Sheila's older sister Rana and her husband Sajju (the architect son of some old friends from Chittagong), and younger sister Seema. Bunting went to the airport at 8 pm. to receive Waiki, returning from a visit to Bangladesh.

Kalyani Mashi's daughter Samina and her young daughter from Karachi wish to come and spend some time here. Chandra and I spoke to Samina on the phone and welcomed them. Spoke to my sister Moitri in Bristol on the phone. I attended two farewell receptions in the evening that were given by Moon Yong of Korea and by Chisa from the French Embassy.

On 18 July, I played 9 holes of golf with Nasser Abbas. As pointed out by my caddy Afsar, best result so far - 5 pars and a birdie (hole No. 9). Today is Waiki's 18th birthday. Chandra made malpoa and payesh - sweet dishes of Bengal. His friends including the Nepalese Ambassador's son Kapil came for high tea. In the evening I attended the French National Day reception at the Ambassador's residence. Some American friends had a joint birthday party at the Youth Centre with about 300 guests. I also attended the Egyptian National Day reception at Islamabad Hotel, that later became the Holiday Inn.

On 29 July, Prince Charles wed Princess Diana at St. Paul's Cathedral. A television artiste friend Sikandar Shaheen and myself were the only males amongst a

bevy of ladies, peppered with a few children, at Tommy's Iftar party. (Her nickname; nobody knows her by her real name).

Am playing the best golf ever. Yesterday I achieved three pars and one birdie. Today I achieved four pars out of six holes. As a consequence of my earlier call on the President regarding the possibility of serving the nation abroad, some weeks earlier it had been decided that I would proceed to Argentina as Ambassador. On 30 July I had a short chat with Foreign Secretary Riaz Piracha at the golf course. He is the same diplomat who had served as our Ambassador when I visited Rangoon in 1971. A few days ago while at golf I had discussed my new assignment with Bakhtiar, Director General (Americas).

A few days ago there was a terrible earthquake and devastation in Iran. A day or so earlier former Prime Minister of Iran Bani Sadr was granted political asylum in Paris.

It is Eid today, 2 August. At 10:30 am, I went to Rawalpindi to greet the President. We rang to greet Syed Afzal Agha and family in Lahore and Ali Jan in Karachi but the latter had gone to Srinagar on a visit. Like Agha he has many relatives in his native Srinagar. Our family had the traditional Eid lunch at the Isa's. It has been the practice since 1972 after my taking up residence in Islamabad. In 1959-61 Muhammad Isa had served in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as the head of the Police Department and we have been friends since then. Originally from Patna, India, where his father was a judge, Isa had settled in East Pakistan and is now settled in Islamabad. Qamruzzaman rang up to greet us. He had been elected to the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly in 1965. In 1971 he was a bye-election MNA from Parbatipur. These elections were held as most of the elected members had either gone underground or had fled to India, after the military crackdown on 25 March 1971.

Both families, like so many unfortunate others, had been displaced all over again due to the 1971 civil war and had to abandon their properties there. Qamaruzzaman's parents had come from Ghazipur in the UP, India, at the time of partition in August 1947 and had settled in Parbatipur in the Dinajpur District of East Pakistan. Not far from the town of Parbatipur, at Poxy is the famous Hardinge Bridge, almost a mile long, named after the Governor General and built in 1812. Travelling from Kolkata to Siliguri, on the broad gauge railway line, we used to be thrilled at the length of the bridge on our way to and from school every year. The special sound when the train was passing over the bridge was a change from the monotony of the sound when passing over the normal track on land.

Qamar told me that a fortnight before the fall of Dhaka, on 2 December 1971, the Mukti Bahini knifed to death his almost 100 year old father. This happened when they could not find Qamar, who had by then taken refuge in Pakistan. The plight of the "Biharis" (who sided with Pakistan during the civil war) still in camps in

Dhaka is indeed horrendous. Bangladesh, Pakistan as well as the international community should help resolve this long festering problem promptly and humanely.

On the morning of 3 August I called on retired Admiral Rashid Ahmad and Parveen and also visited Prince Nasir Khan of Dir and his French wife Odette. In the afternoon managed a few holes of golf. Later I went to Sikander Shaheen and Salima's place and then on to dinner at the Temuri's. There was a dinner at Mithu's (Zulfiqar) house on 13 August. He is Naureen's brother. Naureen and Arshad Sami, old friends and neighbours on Embassy Road, were also there.

On 14 August, Independence Day at 9:00 am, I attended the unfurling of the flag and the President's reception in Rawalpindi. General Zia-ul-Haq has remained on in the COAS house even after becoming President. In his personal conduct he has always been modest, with exquisite manners. Barbara Bush in her memoirs says, Zia's eyes were the most beautiful she had ever seen. Whatever be his politics, I have found him always meticulously polite and correct, even humble. At the reception the President asked me, "All set, Raja Sahib?" I replied in the affirmative. The Asiaweek wrote a piece on me today which is reproduced here:

*WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...*Tridiv Roy,
The Minority Monarch of East Pakistan
THE ASIAWEEK, August 14, 1981

"Until 1971, Tridiv Roy was the Raja (King) of the 200,000 - strong Chakma tribe in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a 13,000 sq.km. tribal belt in the southeastern corner of what is now Bangladesh. A year before, he had won a seat in Pakistan's first democratically elected parliament; the Chakma leader was one of only two politicians who defeated candidates of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League in East Pakistan. When Indian forces liberated Bangladesh in December 1971, Tridiv Roy was touring Southeast Asia. The Chakms have not seen their Raja since: Tridiv Roy decided to give up his crown and kingdom for Pakistan, and flew straight to Islamabad.

Today, Raja Tridiv Roy 47, is an adviser to the Pakistan government on minority affairs. But he is still at the centre of a tug-of-war involving the Bangladesh government and his tribal home. After Pakistan's defeat in the Bangladesh war, the government of Gen. Yahya Khan collapsed, and successor Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto offered Tridiv a post in his new Cabinet. Next day, Tridiv, a Buddhist, took the oath as Minister for Tourism & Minority Affairs. But after nearly two-and-a-half years, he faded out of the limelight and in 1974 he was made a governmental adviser.

Soon after Tridiv's appointment as a Minister, Sheikh Mujib had begun sending feelers to him. If he would return home, perhaps they could work out an arrangement. Tridiv declined; he was happy in Pakistan and he didn't want a relationship with Mujib's people. In September 1972, when

Bangladesh was applying for membership of the United Nations, Bhutto sent the Raja as leader of Pakistan's delegation to the General Assembly. Mujib was delighted. If he could woo Tridiv to Bangladesh's side, it would be a diplomatic coup.

Mujib pulled every trick out of the hat to get the Raja to defect to Bangladesh. When his initial overtures were turned down, Mujib sent an Ambassador to Tridiv's mother in Chittagong Hill Tracts. At the urging of Mujib's men, the Raja's mother flew to New York to see her son. But Tridiv was adamant. Unless the Bangladesh government gave the Chakmas more autonomy and pledged not to interfere in their internal affairs he could not even think of returning to the Hill Tracts. In Tridiv's place, the Bangladesh government installed his eldest son, Devasish Roy, as Raja of Chakma four years ago. "It was done with my knowledge and blessings," Tridiv told Asiaweek recently of teenager's appointment. "But I think most Chakma still consider me as their Raja. Perhaps they think of me as the elder Raja and my son (now 22) as the younger Raja."

But while Tridiv Roy has been working in Islamabad, the Chakmas have been waging a war against the Bangladesh government. Some 3,000 armed Chakma tribesmen are involved in a guerilla battle against Bangladeshi soldiers and paramilitary troops. The dispute isn't new. The predominantly Buddhist Chakmas have traditionally been at loggerheads with Bengali Muslims who form the majority in Bangladesh. Before the 1971 civil war, Pakistan's federal administration was in the hands of West Pakistani Muslims who took a more neutral line between the Bengalis of Chittagong and Chakmas. Since Bangladesh's independence, however, the Chakmas have complained of atrocities and charged that Bengalis are encroaching on their rights.

Will Tridiv ever go back to the Chittagong Hill Tracts? "I'd sure like to go back. My sons, my mother, most of my family are there," he told Correspondent Assif Shameen. "But I won't go there as a Raja. I'd like to go there just to visit my family. I don't think I'd like to live there now." But that doesn't mean he would be unwilling to mediate in the ongoing dispute between the Chakmas and the Bangladesh government. "It's not for me to decide whether I have a role to play. It's up to the authorities in Dhaka. If they think I have a role to play, I'll be glad to help." Until he gets an invitation from Dhaka, however, Tridiv Roy has to be content with the routine of bureaucratic work in Islamabad. "I have very little work to do, intellectually," he says. "I only wish I could do more, perhaps serve the nation in some other way."

On 15 August I attended Admiral Rashid Ahmad and Parveen's wedding anniversary dinner. Rashid and Parveen are congenial company and give enjoyable parties quite frequently. One often meets interesting people at their home, locals and foreigners.

Family friends Annu (Anwar Sher) and his wife Arifa are staying with us. Annu, a young banker goes to BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce) office in Pindi everyday. My youngest brother-in-law, Rani Arati's brother Kabir, is here on a holiday from Moscow where he is studying engineering. Sammy Shah Khan came over from Rawalpindi and had dinner with us. He is a Pakistani Christian from the North West Frontier Province, who retired as a Colonel from the Army. We have known him and his charming wife Nan since their East Pakistan days, when they were stationed in the Kurmitola Cantonment Headquarters in Dhaka in the 1960s. They are both a good-looking pair and warm and sincere.

On 17 August, I received a letter from my ex-wife Martine, to say I was welcome to go and see our son Padma in Indonesia where her husband, who works for the French Foreign Ministry, was posted. We had given the boy the names Padmasambhava and Gwenhael. But everyone knew him as Padma. I saw him in France some years later and he also came to Buenos Aires during a vacation. He got along splendidly with his half brothers and sisters and also with his stepmother, who was then spending some time in Argentina with us.

18 August, it is mother's birthday today. I sent her a telegram. At 7.00 pm, attended a reception by Indian diplomat S.K. Lambah for Priestley, head of UN going to India on transfer. (Lambah would be posted here as Ambassador some years later). About a dozen people had dinner at our house including Spanish First Secretary, Petremont, and his tall, dark and stately Pakistani Christian wife. Tomorrow I will be taking my first Spanish lesson from his sister Maria.

I talked with A.W. Cowasjee in Karachi about my Suzuki car agency matters. He is not the well-known "Dawn" columnist Ardeshir Cowasjee, who had been one time managing director of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) during my tenure as Minister for Tourism. Jamsheed Marker, a famous cricket commentator and subsequently Ambassador of Pakistan for many years, and later representative of the UN Secretary General, is related to Ardeshir by marriage. Their wives were sisters, both now regrettably no more in this world. Jamsheed described it with a colourful analogy: "We are like two customers that at different times happened to buy some cloth from the same bolt." They belong to the Parsi community.

The Khansama (cook) Razzaq has returned from Murree after a month. He is no longer young, and has a heart condition, because of which his family would not let him go to Argentina with us.

On 19 August Erwin Siegl with his new wife and two young daughters visited us. He took my handprint for a famous astrologer of Varanasi, the Indian holy city, of whom he speaks highly. Erwin promised to send me the astrologer's predictions, which he did later on. Annu and Arifa left for Lahore at 5:00 am. and took Fatso, Yuri's pup. When we leave, Manzoor, our servant, will take Yuri. The Temuris wanted her but Manzoor had asked and had been promised already. I do not recall how we came by Yuri, nor who had given her a male name, but she was a very affectionate pet and we all missed her a great deal initially in Buenos Aires.

On 20 August, along with Chandra, had dinner at Bangladesh Ambassador Nazrul Islam's residence.

The news of my appointment as Ambassador to Argentina was released to the Press today as I gave my OK to the Deputy Chief of Protocol. The host government's agrement (approval) had come through earlier.

On 24 August I attended a reception by the representative of UNDP. The next day I purchased some double-knotted carpets from Pak Persian, to augment the few I have, mainly from Lahore. Actually they are all rugs, only one is of the required size to qualify as a carpet. It has a floral motif on an off white background. One of the rugs I bought today has a typical Tree of Life design, a green on green that caught my fancy.

On 27 August I played golf and bridge, and later joined a party at Munir Pirzada's house. He is a businessman and former tennis champion and his petite and pretty wife is Noshi. Like Noshi, most of the invitees were fond of dancing and the music for the most part was fast and frenzied. Returned at 2:45 am. Bomb blasts and hartal (strike) in Dhaka and in seven towns in Bangladesh were announced on the Radio PTV.

At 7:00 pm, on 1 September, I left by PIA for Karachi. On 2 September there was a meeting with the Karachi Chamber of Commerce. Had dinner with Shakeel Saigal, his sparkling wife, and other guests.

On 3 September, I had dinner with Arif of Ispahani's. Arif is an old friend from Chittagong days and an avid bridge player. In his University days he had held first or second place in the whole of undivided India in table tennis. He was a tea taster and the head of the tea division of Ispahani's many companies in East Pakistan, and the "Burra Sahib's" right hand man. He has a law degree but has never practiced; he cannot do without a car but has never learnt to drive. He was good company and full of life. However, over the years he had allowed rich food and lack of exercise to dominate until he had a stroke in the mid 1980s. Whenever I visited Pakistan from Argentina, I went to see him and Duru in Karachi. In the early 1990s they moved to the US to be near their children. They have always been generous in their friendship and hospitality, like Ali Jan, Iqbal Ismi, and of course, the Afzal Aghas.

On 4 September, I had dinner with Uncle Rehmat and Aunty Kalyani. She is my mother's first cousin and she and her family are the only relatives I have in Pakistan. Rehmat Ali Khan, well over 6 feet tall, whose mother was English, worked for Burma Shell Oil Company. His father, the formidable Pakhtun (Pathan) Qurban Ali Khan had been the Agent General of Balochistan many years ago. Uncle Rehmat is extremely urbane with a well-developed sense of humour and is popular. Kalyani Mashi is sophisticated and also plays bridge. They have two children, tall and beautiful Samina who writes, and a bright young Haider who shines academically.

On 5 September, as I was leaving for Islamabad later in the day we started bridge at 10:30 am, with the tall, attractive Mrs. Thariani and her guests at their flat. One of her sisters is an eminent gynaecologist in Rawalpindi. Salim Thariani is an engineer friend from East Pakistan days who, along with his architect brother, designed the Chakma House in Islamabad for me. They declined to accept any fee. Their firm had designed the impressive State Bank building in Dhaka in the 1960s. I left around 4 pm, in time to attend the reception at the Brazilian Embassy in Islamabad.

On 9 September an American anthropologist came to see me. He was interested in the exotic indigenous Kalash people who live in three valleys in Chitral in an area called Kafiristan. They have their own customs, religion, dress and language. Some consider them to be descendants of Alexander's soldiers, others a branch of the wandering pastoral Aryans. Robertson wrote about them many years ago. Some French sociologists and anthropologists have shown interest in them in recent years. One of the best known is Georges Lefeuvre, who many years later headed the French Cultural Centre in Islamabad. He spent much time with them over the years. A friend of mine, who is a civil service officer (CSP), Alaudin wrote a book about them in the early 1990s called "Kalash – the paradise lost". He put in a lot of facts and figures; I had written the foreword. I had visited the Kalash a few times in the 1970s and as Minister for Minorities Affairs had taken some measures to ameliorate their condition. President Bhutto had also once visited them, in the early 1970s along with me.

At 11:30 am, on 11 September I attended the cultural function of minorities at the Liaquat Memorial Hall in Rawalpindi, not far from the park where Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister had been shot dead on 16 October 1951. Then I lunched with Argentine Ambassador Raul Desmaras (who was ever helpful to Pakistan when he was back in his homeland). At 8:30 pm, had dinner with Nasser Abbas, my golf partner, at his home opposite Rana Market with an attractive grey stone façade.

On 12 September I had tea with Rev. Ishaq Mazhar and dinner with Bangladesh Ambassador Nazrul Islam, also a bridge player, at his residence. Later there was a party at Aitzaz Azim's place. He is a family friend and fond of giving parties. He is the younger brother of General Ejaz Azim. Khalid Hassan in his book "Remembrance," says: "There are some people you can only imagine alive, well and laughing. Ejaz Azim was one such. He was genuinely warm-hearted and his outlook

on things was invariably upbeat and optimistic. ..... As Ambassador of Pakistan to Washington, he kept open house and was always accessible to those who wanted to see him. I would often ask junior employees of the Embassy in Washington, drivers, messengers, receptionists etc., what kind of an Ambassador Ejaz Azim was. Since nobody had to say anything they did not mean – Ejaz having long left – they clearly said what they felt. Not one of them had anything but warm praise for his simplicity and humanity. 'He was a very good man and cared about those who were weak and held small jobs. He never looked past us or over our heads. He was always wanting to know if there was anything we needed help with.'" In the 1980s Arati and I once spent a couple of days in New York on our way to Houston from Buenos Aires. Once we were in his jurisdiction our Ambassador to the US, General Ejaz Azim, true to character, rang me up from Washington and was extremely solicitous.

Ambassadors-designate are expected to call on various authorities and organizations to apprise themselves of the state of affairs at home and matters concerning the country or countries of their charge, so I called on the Governor of NWFP on 15 September 1981. I went by road to Peshawar and returned the same evening.

On 16 September, the Chairman of Export Promotion Bureau, Hamid D. Habib came to see me at my house. He is knowledgeable and gave me useful advice.

The distinguished civil servant S. Ghiasuddin Ahmad Khan, former Defence Secretary General and his wife, who was an active social worker, both friends of Uncle Rehmat Ali Khan and Kalyani Mashi, invited me to dinner. The host, and Rear Admiral Anwer Saeed who became Chief of Protocol in 1972 and subsequently Ambassador to North Korea and Oman, were natty dressers who often wore a handkerchief in their sleeves. It was a slightly outdated sartorial quirk, notwithstanding its elegance, but they carried it off and didn't appear in any way effete or unduly foppish. Somehow they would bring to my mind Sir Percy Blakeney, the Scarlet Pimpernel of the Baroness Orczy books.

In late 1957 I had gone to Karachi to attend a Central Cotton Committee meeting. Hill Tracts being the only producer of cotton in East Pakistan, I was a member of the advisory committee. Our Deputy Commissioner Syed Afzal Agha had asked me to stay at Manora Island at Lt. Commander Anwer Saeed's house. His sister Shammi was married to Anwer. At the Karachi airport, dressed in his black and gold winter naval uniform (for ease of identification) and accompanied by his wife, Anwer was on the lookout for "The Chief". He thought I might turn out in sword and turban, or feathers and warpaint. After some time, in desperation he was on the verge of requesting an announcement over the public address system, when I approached him and asked if he was Lt Commander Anwer Saeed. He nearly fell overboard, only he was on dry land, at seeing a slim 24-year old man in ordinary clothes. He had somehow expected an older man he said with more girth and more pronounced Mongolian features. I have high cheekbones and my eyes are slightly obliquely set, though these features are somewhat muted. However, my nose is not flat. My mother,

a Calcutta Bengali, considered herself of pure Aryan descent. My father's side is proudly Mongolian.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto would sometimes refer to me as Raja Inder. Inder or Indra is the King of the gods (devas) in heaven with a zest for high living. In his court there are his dancing *apsaras* of great beauty and talent such as Rambha, Tilottama, Menaka and Urvasi. Tagore wrote a poem on Urvasi who rose from the primordial sea like Aphrodite. Urvasi fell in love with Arjun, the third Pandava, when he went to his father's court in heaven to learn music and dancing. Arjun being the son of Indra rejected her advances because he said he considered her like a mother. On being rejected Urvasi cursed him and he became a eunuch for one year. According to Buddhists, these *apsaras* and devas are vigorous and youthful like 16-year olds, brimming with health and beauty and they never age. When the time comes the devas, each according to his Karma, disappears and reappears in another plane of existence. Buddhists believe that rebirth is in one of four forms: natureborn, oviparous, viviparous or apparitional (a process by which one simply appears or disappears on the basis of Karmic force). The Devas and Apsaras live in the various heavens in the World of Form, according to individual Karma, and then move on. This form of birth, in the heavens, is apparitional.

On 17 September Erwin Siegl and Lenhart Nielsson came in the morning. They had worked under the Swedish assistance programme at the technical school for Hill Tracts students at Kaptai, Chittagong Hill Tracts, where the hydel dam was constructed.

I played golf with Anwar Said, Chief Architect of CDA (Capital Development Authority). I am his daughter Shandana's godfather. Had a dinner at Aitzaz Azim's house given by Nighat, Tommy and Tulli. Defence Minister Mir Ali Ahmed Khan Talpur and his new wife also attended. There was dancing.

On 18 September, after a holiday with us, my brother-in-law Kabir left for Karachi on his way to Moscow where he is an engineering student. Sivasish (Bunting) accompanied him up to Karachi. The daily *Muslim* has stopped publication today due to financial and union troubles.

On 20 September, wished my son Sivasish at Karachi on the phone as it was his birthday. Old friend Sadri Ispahani who generally resides in England rang from Karachi. The "Muslim" started publishing again after two days. I attended a farewell reception given by the Christian Association. It was held at Islamabad Hotel, with speeches and ghazals. Donated 5000 rupees to the Association. They in turn donated it to the earthquake victims in Gilgit. They presented me with an onyx fruit bowl as a memento.

28 September, newspapers reported on a raid by indigenous Hill Tracts guerrillas in Bangladesh resulting in 18 deaths. At 8:00 pm, I recorded my farewell message before I left for Argentina, to the people of the Hill Tracts on the Mitali programme of Radio Pakistan.

I attended a formal dinner given by the Argentine Ambassador. Defence Minister Mir Talpur attended. Roedad Khan, Secretary of the Ministry of Minorities and Tourism could not attend as he was unexpectedly called by the President. Other friends attended. After the dinner some of them came to my home, Chakma House, and sang and danced.

According to "Muslim," of 29 September, 500 persons were killed in clashes between Bangladesh soldiers and the hillpeople. Bangladesh soldiers have reportedly raped many indigenous women. About 15,000, mainly Chakmas fled to Tripura. On 1 October, there were reports of continuing clashes with Bangladesh forces. My speech was broadcast on the Mitali programme today.

On 3 October as per newspaper reports Bangladesh, after having forcibly expelled the jumma hillpeople, almost all Chakmas, have now agreed at a border meeting with India to take them back. Question is will the jummas want to come back? What guarantees are there for their safety and their honour and dignity?

Given below is a copy of the reply I had received almost two years ago (when I had been Adviser on Tourism, before being followed by Minorities) from Otto Von Habsburg, Head of Human Rights Matters in the European Parliament, with regard to human rights violations in the Hill Tracts:

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
His Excellency
Raja Tridiv Roy
Adviser on Tourism
Government of Pakistan
ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN.

21st October 1979

Your Excellency,

Thank you very much for your thoughtful letter of September 30th and for your kindness in drawing my attention to human rights violations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. I am most grateful to possess the important data, which you sent me on a matter about which I had already heard, but had so far lacked the necessary information.

The present situation in the European Parliament is as follows: we shall have, in the foreseeable future, a special sub-committee on human rights and human rights violations. I have been informed that I shall be elected to that sub-committee. I would then not fail to submit the data to the sub-committee so that the matter might be adequately raised either directly with the Bangladesh government, or through due attraction of public attention. I do feel that it would be better to wait till the sub-committee acts, than to do anything now. The weight of a sub-committee is of course greater than that of a single member in Parliament. The question of Afghanistan was raised by me at the time when there was still no interest in a sub-committee for human rights; may be the discussion on Afghanistan has helped to arouse an interest which, I trust, will continue growing.

May I ask you to have the kindness, if you have any additional data, to send them to me from time to time. In the meantime I can assure you that I shall not forget the problem.

I am, Excellency,

Yours very sincerely,

Sd/-

(Otto Von Habsburg)

.....

I attended Bangladesh Ambassador's reception given for West German Ambassador to Dhaka. I have asked Ambassador Nazrul Islam to send a message to his President to grant autonomy within Bangladesh to Hill Tracts. I am ready to help if required, if autonomy is granted. He promised to send the message tomorrow.

Some time later, my friend K.K. Panni's son Bunty, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in Bangladesh, telephoned me in Buenos Aires asking me to go and meet President Ershad on his forthcoming visit to New York. However, when I asked whether the President was prepared to grant meaningful autonomy to the Hill Tracts he said he would check with the Preisdent and ring me back. He did not do so, so obviously Ershad had the same approach to the Hill Tracts issue as his predecessors. They wanted me there to play a pro-Bangladesh role, but not one of them was prepared in return to meet our legitimate demand for autonomy. Apparently they believed in a one way street. More the pity.

On 8 October, I received Margaret Thatcher at the airport, attended the banquet for her and saw her off. Like ZAB she was also an Oxford graduate and a barrister. Like him she did not get an honorary doctorate from the University, because, according to some, she drastically cut down educational grants in the nation's budget. In Bhutto's case the refusal was due to his undemocratic measures and taking Pakistan out of the British Commonwealth. Such were the perceptions, whether wholly true or not. ZAB had actually invited his history tutor Trevor-Roper and Alexandra on 28 March 1972 and I had accompanied them on a tour of Swat on 1 April 1972. I heard on the grapevine that Trevor Roper had tried hard to get the university to award ZAB an honorary degree. Inviting his former tutor is on par, whether he had an ulterior motive is mere conjecture. Later Trevor-Roper became Lord Dacre of Glauton. His book on the last days of Hitler is a good read. It is said to be well researched.

9 October was Eid-ul-Azha. We had the traditional lunch with the Isa family at their house in Satellite Town, Rawalpindi.

On 10 October, William and Mrs. Lee, the owners of the Golden Dragon Chinese restaurant in the F-7/3 sector of Islamabad, gave a lunch in my honour in a separate room. Mrs. Lee is going to take my place as President of the All Pakistan Buddhist Society.

The Jamis gave a dinner. Mrs. Jami, Sitara, is a vivacious Bengali lady whose father used to play bridge with us at Chittagong. Her husband is a businessman, originally from Uttar Pradesh (U.P). They throw lively parties, with lots of music and often dancing as well. There was another farewell dinner at Admiral Rashid Ahmad's place on 13 October.

On the morning of the 16th with Chandra, the Lees and Qamruzzaman, went to the Holy Peepul Tree at the foot of the Margalla Hills and lit candles. According to legend a Buddhist monk used to meditate here in ancient times, and if one prayed here with devotion one gained merit and positive results ensued.

I called on President Zia at his home in Rawalpindi that evening at 6:30. Foreign Secretary Riaz Piracha was also present. I gave my recommendation on appointment of Adviser on Minorities in my place, and some advice about Church properties in the Punjab. The President said, "We will protect your business interests here." He also asked me to let him know if the foreign allowance was inadequate. And if I needed more of my personal money to be sent, that could be arranged, he assured me. I have been granted an additional Rs. 1000/- per month to make it equivalent to present salary; am also permitted to remit US$ 600/- per month to myself in Argentina on my personal account.

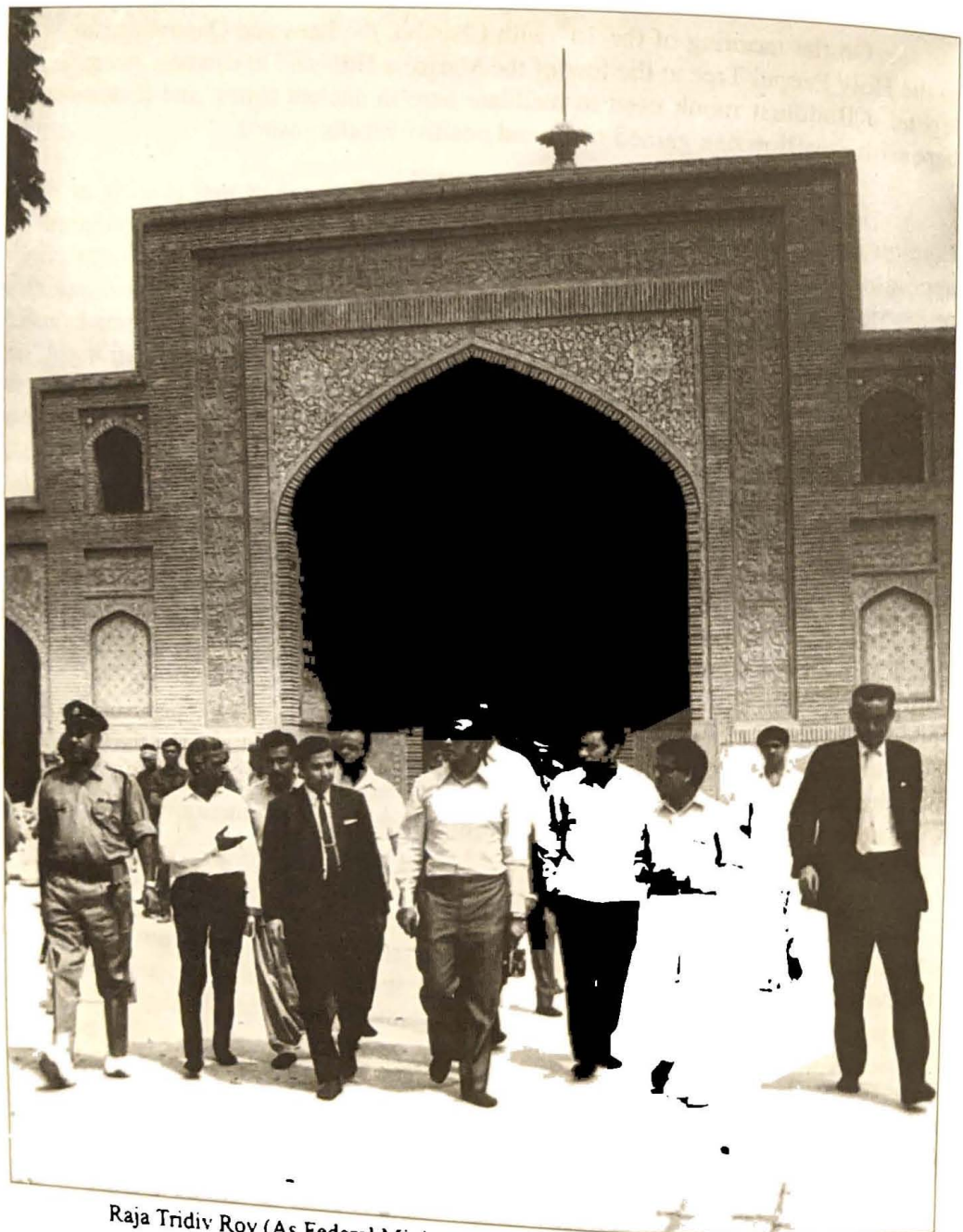
On 19 October, I had dinner at the home of Prince Nasir of Dir and Odette. The Prince is a keen bridge player. Odette is an occasional player, a charming and soft-spoken hostess. Later we danced at the house of the owners of London Book Co. The lady of the house, Riffy, the daughter of an important Karachi politician, is a bright and chirpy socialite, and the host Rahman Mani ever low key and pleasant.

On 20 October, I called on Gen. Iqbal, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, at Chaklala at 11:30 am, and on the Foreign Secretary at 1:00 pm. In the evening I attended Secretary of the Ministry of Minorities Affairs and Tourism, Roedad Khan's wedding reception for his son. Went on to a Hindu temple function in Rawalpidi at 7:45 pm. There were farewell speeches.

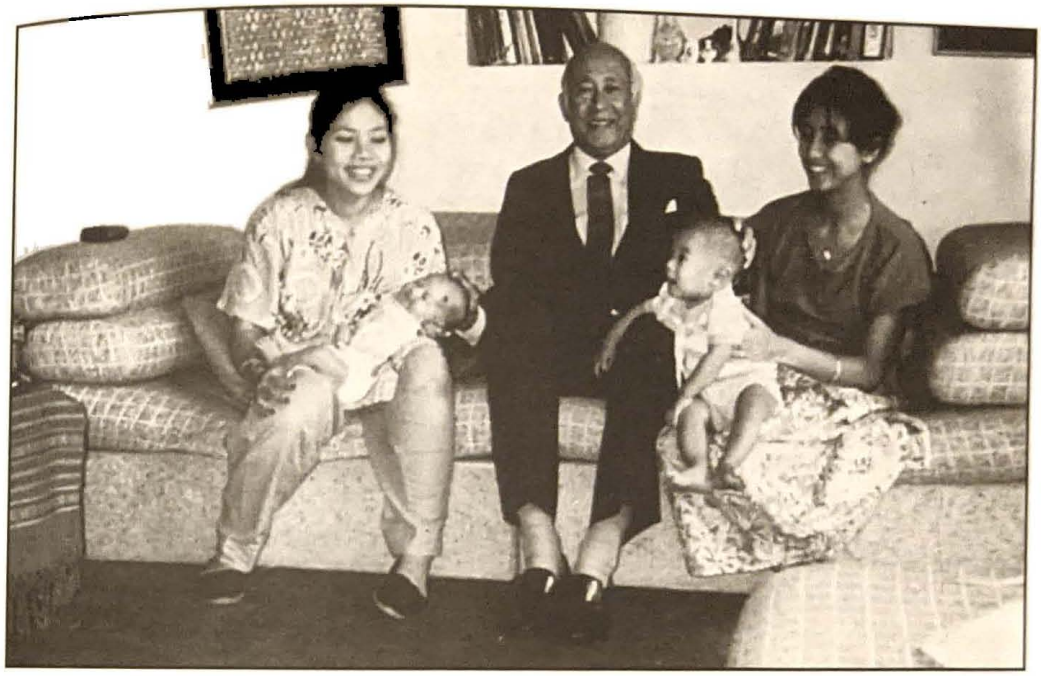
On 22 October, my old friend Sammy Shah Khan came to say goodbye. Had lunch at Mahmud Ali's house. He is a Bengali political leader from Sylhet who believes in the Pakistan ideology and while supporting maximum autonomy was against East Pakistan's outright secession. Many Bengalis had held this view, but drastic events that rapidly followed each other in 1971 were such that people's wishes were swept away by a cataclysmic tidal wave of strife, violence and war. In the evening, the Temuris dropped in, and some of Waiki's friends too, to say goodbye.

On 23 October, Admiral Rashid Ahmad and Parveen, the Lees and others came to the Chakma House in the morning to say goodbye. Apart from the Ambassadors of Argentina and Thailand, the Advanis, a prominent Hindu couple of Rawalpindi and the *Pujari* of the Pindi Hindu Temple, Joint Secretary Asad Parvez

and the staff of the Minorities Ministry came to the airport. My friend Qamruzzaman and Jiten, a Chakma boy who works for the Pakistan Tourism Corporation, also came to the airport to see me off. After a decade in Islamabad I left for London en route to Buenos Aires to take up my new assignment there as Ambassador to Argentina, concurrently accredited to Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Uruguay.

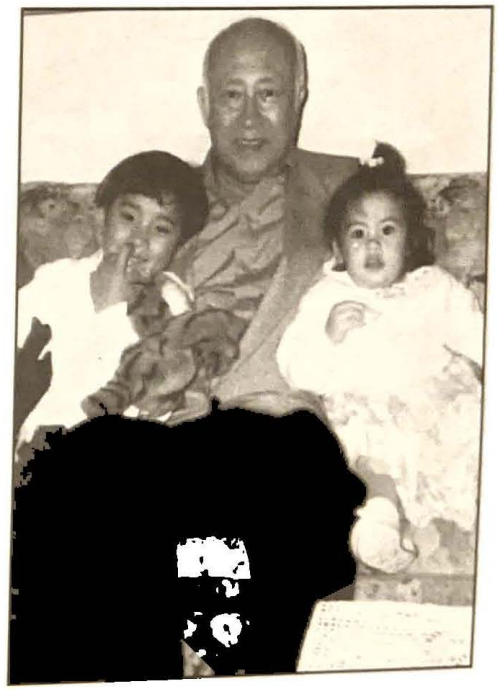


Raja Tridiv Roy (As Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs & Tourism):
At historical Shahjahani Mosque, Thatta (Sindh). On his left is
Tariq Saeed Haroon (then his Private Secretary)



At Pakistan Embassy Residence, Buenos Aires:(left to right) Rani Tatu with Tribhuvan, Raja Tridiv Roy,Rajkumari Troya with Solis, circa 1990.

Raja Tridiv Roy: With grandchildren Solis and Tribhuvan, in Argentina, Circa 1990



Raja Tridiv Roy: With grandchildren Shukdev Solis (left) and Carol Shapna (right) in Argentina, Circa 1994.

ARCTIC OCEAN
80°
Arctic Circle
ASIA
EUROPE
NORTH AMERICA
40°
ATLANTIC
Tropic of Cancer
PACIFIC
OCEAN
PACIFIC
0°
Equator
AFRICA
OCEAN
INDIAN
OCEAN
SOUTH AMERICA
Tropic of Capricorn
OCEAN
BUENOS AIRES
AUSTRALIA
Antarctic Circle
ANTARCTICA
80°
160°
120°
80°
40°
0°
40°
80°
120°
160°

PART III

SOUTHERN PEREGRINATIONS

CHAPTER I

Agreement with Argentina

A glance at a map of the world will show that Argentina is about as far as you can get from Pakistan. So when I was offered an Ambassadorial assignment to Argentina, I did have some mixed feelings. Ever since I left my home and people on a quest for peace and a political settment to the civil war, and when East Pakistan seceded to become Bangladesh, I had lived in Islamabad, and in ten years had put down roots. I had my bridge playing circle, golfing friends and several other delightful social companions. Leaving all these for at least 3 years would not be easy. But the proposal did have its attractions. The post carried concurrent accreditation to Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Uruguay; one could hardly resist visits to such exotic faraway places.

I reached Buenos Aires on 4 November 1981, when the military President General Roberto Viola was in power. However, in a few days it was given out that he was ill. On 30 November, I presented credentials to the acting President (who had been Interior Minister), Lt. Gen. Horacio Liendo. Before the year was out, there was an in-house change, and the Army Chief, General Leopoldo Fotunato Galtieri, took over as President of Argentina. In all, in 1981, there were five Presidents of the nation. Military Presidents in Argentina appear to have been the rule rather than the exception, also in the 20th century. Between 1930 and 1958, eight of the ten Presidents were generals.

The Chancery was located halfway up a corner building about eleven storeys high at the intersection of Avenue Alvear and Libertad Street. It was less than a stone's throw from the Nunciatura, the French and Brazilian embassies, and the prestigious Jockey Club. Pakistan's first Ambassador, Khurram Khan Panni had rented the apartment as his residence in 1966. Subsequently it was transformed into the Chancery.

On my first day at the office I wrote to the Secretary, Science and Technology in Islamabad, urging him to waive the objections and send the approval to the draft agreement, as none of them was substantive but merely semantic. Due to my keenness, as he put it, he agreed and sent the approval. It was the first and only agreement signed with Argentina, until 2002 when finally the Trade agreement was signed by my successor's successor. During my tenure mangoes were sent as gifts from Pakistan. I think the mangoes had the greatest impact and were highly

appreciated by the government functionaries including the President of the nation. For promoting goodwill I think mangoes should be sent every year.

The three-month summer vacation in Buenos Aires starts from December and the city becomes deserted until March. A Pakistani banker from Montevideo, Mushfiq Khan invited me over for a few days from 29 December. Mushfiq and Nancy's hospitality also included a trip to the famed holiday resort Punta del Este, which for the first time in many years was almost deserted. Argentines reluctantly stayed away because the value of their peso had eroded incredibly due to hyperinflation. With the Khans I attended a fabulous New Year's Eve party at a French couple's from the World Bank, then headed back toward Buenos Aires on 1 January, 1982.

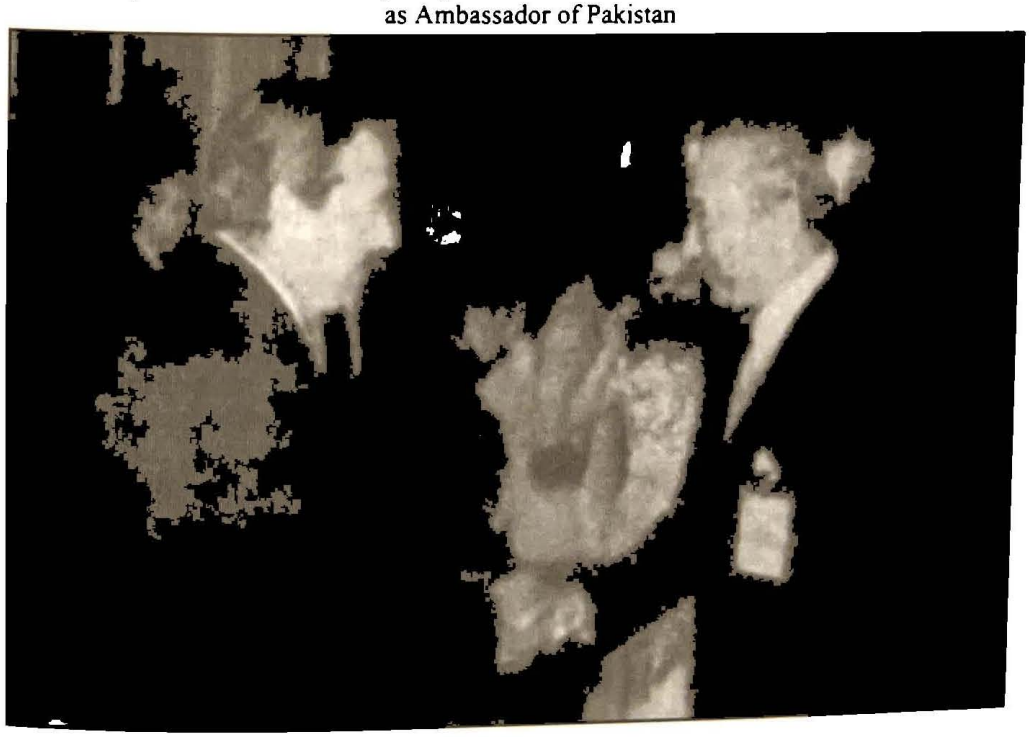
In Montevideo, the capital city of Uruguay, originally a fortress built by the Spanish against Portuguese Colonia in 1726, the streets were littered with shredded files and papers thrown out from office windows on the night of 31 December. Not only were the streets littered with paper but streamers and odd scraps clung to window sills, lightposts and overhead electric wires, on their descent to the street. This custom of jettisoning old papers on the last day of the year is not exclusive to Montevideo. It happens in Latin American cities and in the most Europeanised city of Buenos Aires as well.

Juan Diaz de Solis the explorer sailed up the Rio de la Plata in 1516 and landed at a spot east of the present day capital Montevideo, near Maldonado. On his second visit he landed in the district of Colonia and was promptly killed by the indigenous Charrua people. In 1680 the Portuguese in Brazil founded the small city of Colonia as a rival to Buenos Aires 68 km across the turgid Rio de La Plata on the opposite shore. It remains a small town with historical ruins, but the difference with Buenos Aires is greater than that between Boston and New York City. The River Plate was so named by the early Spanish explorers (Plata means silver as well as money in Spanish) because they had hoped to find silver in the region, but had not. Argentina, however, had almost everything else of value, and its potentials are yet to be realized though around 1920 it was economically on a par or a little ahead of Canada and Australia.

From Montevideo, the city that boasts more than 860 varieties of roses, my driver Quinteros and I motored 186 km to the Uruguayan port town of Colonia to board the ferry to Buenos Aires. These large boats with spacious, comfortable saloons and duty free shops, can carry at least fifty cars, and take about three hours one way. (About ten years later, Australian fast and modern boats plied from Buenos Aires directly to Montevideo in about two hours.)

On return to Buenos Aires, on my way to the Jockey Club Course in San Isidro for a round of golf, I tried to figure out the relative values of the baffling Peso notes. They were brown, green, blue, pink, and finally red. To relieve my mind from these mathematical complexities, I glanced at the greenery of the pleasing landscape

Raja Tridiv Roy at Casa Rosada (Presidential Palace) at Buenos Aires Argentina, being received ceremonially for presentation of credentials on 30 November 1981 as Ambassador of Pakistan



Raja Tridiv Roy: With President Raul Alfonsin of Argentina, circa 1982

outside. I also noticed a succession of empty bottles on the roof of stationary cars. One encounters this sight quite frequently, particularly in Buenos Aires. Quinteros explained that it meant the car was for sale. As his English was poorer than even my incipient Spanish, he punctuated his fluent flow of Castellano with many gestures and with frequent repetitions of his favourite word "barato", which means cheap.

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The train to San Carlos de Bariloche (pronounced Barilochey) left Buenos Aires at 8 in the morning and arrived at 2:30 in the afternoon on the following day. Until the 19th century the indigenous Mapuche people had resisted the encroaching Argentine occupation. It was only in 1902 that Ezequiel Bustillo founded the city on a mountainside in the Andean highlands, overlooking the 531 sq. km lake Nahuel Huapi. Situated at 767 metres above sea level, the lake has been formed in a trough created by Pleistocene glaciers, and in places it is over 450 metres deep. Bariloche is 1600 km by road from Buenos Aires and is accessible not only by road and train, but also by a number of daily flights. From here excursions set out for various attractions: cruises to Isla Victoria and other arms of the lake, car and bus trips to forests in the National Park, to mountain lakes, to other towns and regions of Patagonia, or across the Andes to Chile.

In the southern winter of June and July international ski competitions are often held here, apart from exhibitions, conferences and sporting events. For the more contemplative there is trout fishing or quiet walks. Many schools in Buenos Aires and elsewhere take their final year students for a four or five day tour to Bariloche – a red letter day when the trip begins, by train or bus, in fulfilment of long junior year dreams.

We are in midsummer. The sun set at 8:35 in the evening and twilight lingered on till 10 last night – an experience unimagined in warmer latitudes, where once the sun is down darkness sets in fast. In Bengal the brief twilight is romanticized as "Godhuli" – cow dust – the soft dust raised by cattle returning from pasture. It has an aura of gently approaching darkness that is tentative, suggestive. This is the hour prescribed for viewing the prospective bride, for the complexion is at its best at this time of day.

Restaurants at Bariloche are a delight. They have the best steaks in the world which you could eat with a fork they are so tender. Argentina is deservedly famed for its beef. One gourmet is said to have given his expert opinion: because the Argentine bovine population is fed pampa grass only, and the only exercise they take is when they walk to the slaughterhouse. The mainstay of all Argentine meals is beef. Vegetables are tolerated but many, especially from the older generations, consider that vegetables are for the sick. Wild game abounds around Bariloche. You could order wild boar, venison, trout – fresh or smoked, attractively garnished with seasoning of your choice. Taking time off between delectable meals served amidst scenic pulchritude, with lofty Andean peaks all around, I took a cruise on the lake

that took me to the Parque Nacional de los Arrayanes. The Arrayan tree is a species belonging to the myrtle family – tall and stately.

The National Park of Nahuel Huapi near Bariloche is 75,800 hectares, donated to the state by Dr. Francisco Perito Moreno, at the turn of the 19th century with the stipulation that it would be kept open to the people at large. Perito Moreno, the politician, explorer and surveyor, demarcated the border with Chile and also gave his name to a glacier, more than a million years old that moves five yards a day smashing icebergs on its way and thundering down the cliff as it enters the lake with spectacular spume and spray. To be in its presence, particularly for those not familiar with snow mountains and glaciers, is an unforgettable experience, a mystical communion between evanescent being and primordial nature.

When I visited Calafate, the nearest town to the advancing glacier, it only had a small landing strip, no airport. On a cruise on Lago Argentino, after a bus trip from Calafate, I saw chunks of iceberg, white, with surprising blue in parts – not powder blue or azure like the sky at the horizon but shades of turquoise, ultramarine, cobalt, and Prussian blue. In Spanish, in Latin America invariably called Castellano (pronounced castejano), there is not one word for blue but two: celeste, Cambridge blue, is a separate word from azul, Oxford or dark blue. Of course, as in English there are different words for the various tones and shades, as well.

At 8:15 one morning, I boarded a bus from Bariloche and headed south for Esquel, capital of Chubut province, a 292 km drive amid sylvan serenity. In town there is a statue of Perito Moreno to whom the Patagonian provinces owe much. And Patagonia is not four squares in extent. It occupies about a quarter of the whole of Argentina. And Argentina is vast, 1068301 sq miles (27,66,889 sq. km) with only a population of 32.69 millions (in 1990). The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has a territory of 94,227 sq miles and a population of 57.41 million (in 1990). It means that Argentina has a territory more than 11 times larger, and a population that is little more than half.

Esquel is a charming Andean town with a certain Welsh flavour, being the centre of the largest Welsh concentration in the country. On the main highway, close to the city approach, there is a stone figure of a man with a hat and a pipe in his mouth, charmingly reminiscent of a snowman built by playful children. I stayed in one of the compact little triangular log cabins, only a little bigger than a doll's house, so utilitarian, and popular with tourists. I found it cosy and quite adequate. After all, I am on a familiarization tour and should get the feel of the place like an average, not a privileged, visitor.

At 8:00 in the morning joined an excursion tour by bus and motor launch. We were about twenty, mainly Argentines from the north and a few elderly Americans. First we visited the lakes with clear waters reflecting many shades of green and blue. They had names like Verde (green), and Cisnes (swan). One could picture a ballerina at the Colon Theatre in white, floating gracefully in a performance

of Swan Lake. Another lake, Futalaufquen, has an average depth of 400 metres, below which there is 400 metres of ice, 800 metres from the bottom of the lake to the surface.

The cruise, and a walk in the rain in the Parque Nacional was exhilarating. What a thought – to be among 2600-year-old living trees called Alerces. They were already 150 years old when Socrates was stoically putting up with Zanthiope's regular dose of scoldings, and contemporaneous with the Buddha. These ancient trees, like the Redwoods of California, are among the oldest living trees today. Following close after them would be the pipal tree at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka – a sapling brought over by Emperor Ashoka's daughter Sanghamitra from the descendant of the original tree under which Siddhartha Gautama the Shakyan prince attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35, and became the Buddha.

Bought some sweaters and chocolate, for which Bariloche is famous, especially the root like ones. In sweets and sweaters Bariloche and Mar del Plata are close rivals, as River Plate and Boca Juniors are at football.

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'Villas miserias', conglomerations of tin and cardboard shanties, were like ugly carbuncles on the face of the fair city of Buenos Aires. There were about half a million people with precarious shelter in about a hundred 'villas miserias' in and around the city. Yet it boasted 150 parks, one park four miles long along Avenida San Martin, golf courses galore in the Greater Buenos Aires area, polo and football fields, innumerable tennis and paddle tennis courts. Besides, the city could rightfully take pride in the Colon Theatre, the municipal theatre for opera and ballet that covers almost an entire city block, with a stage that can accommodate six hundred. In addition, it has its own orchestra, chorus, and ballet corps, besides workshops producing all the artiste's requirements, from buttons to ballet shoes. And because the stage is bigger the auditorium holds a row or two less seats than the La Scala of Milan. The national stadium holds 100,000 people, and the number of cinema houses is almost countless. There are also excellent theatre shows and tango performances.

In Latin America it is common, apart from the names of historical persons, to find streets and avenues named after countries as well as historical events like important battle dates or days of national importance: 25 de Mayo, declaration of Independence in Tucuman in 1810, and 9 de Julio (pronounced Hulio), at 460 feet, the widest avenue and commemorates Independence Day in 1816. Until recent years it was the widest avenue in the world. Another important and much longer highway, the Avenida del Libertador, comfortably accommodates twenty cars abreast. There are good hotels, restaurants, shopping centres and cinemas, and the famous walking streets, Calle Florida and Lavalle, where stroll the shoppers, the tourists and the elegant. Argentines, men and women, are well dressed and it is rare to see people dressed shabbily even when they are not well off.

After the majority community in Argentina, which is about fifty percent with Italian blood, and the descendants of the Spanish called *CRIOLLO*, that is, after the mainstream Italian and Spanish immigrants, come the Turcos (Turks). These are the descendants of Syrian and Lebanese immigrants, who were citizens of the Ottoman empire when they came to Argentina. The former President, Carlos Saul Menem, is of Syrian Muslim parentage from the province of La Rioja. Carlos Menem converted to Catholicism when quite young but his parents, brothers, ex wife and his charming daughter are Muslims. (On 14 May 2003, Menem withdrew from the contest and Kirchner won the presidential election and was sworn in on 25 May.)

He had a dashing young son, Carlos Junior, who died during his father's presidency while piloting a helicopter. Supposedly the blades got entangled in overhead electric wires in a locality called Ramallo in the province of Buenos Aires on the outskirts of the city, though some suspect foul play. Local newspapers mentioned that lead or some similar metal was found on the body of the helicopter by army technicians after analysis. The presiding judge modified the title of the case from "accidental" to "doubtful death." Investigations continue.

Then there is the Jewish community, the largest outside Israel and New York. They are to be found in politics, commerce and industries and the professions. The only profession they have so far been excluded from is the military, but nonetheless they wield enormous influence in practically every sphere of Argentine life. There is of course the Anglo-Argentine community, well knit and powerful, said to be the largest outside Britain. There are also small Japanese, Chinese and Korean communities that number in thousands.

In Buenos Aires Italian influence is palpable. One says "chiao", more often than "adios" or "hasta luego" when bidding goodbye. The dwellers of the capital, the Portenos, have many a charming custom like eating *noquis*, a macaroni type preparation, at the end of the month and putting money under the pillow. Objective: to gain money. Another custom, more romantic, is that a man, from a teenager to the middle aged, follows a woman quite a distance on foot, paying her compliments called *piropos*, and with flowery innuendos asking for a date. I was told that sometimes it works. Even when it does not, the lady does not swing her handbag at his head, she merely retreats from the entreaties gracefully.

One afternoon, after lunch with a friend at the Costanera – a mile long river front of restaurants specializing in the *parrilla* (grilled) food – went and had coffee at the popular Café de la Paix at the Recoleta. This is one of the poshest areas in town. Some of the affluent live in this area or nearby at Barrio Norte. It also has some good restaurants and nightclubs. Recoleta is famous for the incredibly splendid and lavishly laid out cemetery of the rich and the famous. Every day there is a stream of eager visitors, apart from the relatives of those interred, sometimes in shelves of marble vaults laid out one on top of the other. The UN office is located next door to the high walled cemetery and is often mistaken for being a part of it. The opulent Portenos (port dwellers; Buenos Aires is the second biggest port in South America

after Santos – Sao Paulo, Brazil) enjoy life, eating, drinking and dancing in close juxtaposition to the dead.

President Juan Domingo Peron, of Sardinian ancestry, and the most controversial President in the 20th century, rests in the Chacarita cemetery on the outskirts of the city. (His hands were chopped off sometime around 1985. One wag said that it was done because Peron was dipping his hands in the till (kickbacks) and those concerned did not want their share diminished through Peron's ever growing greedy hands. Some say the act smacks of the Sicilian streak of vendetta. This act of vandalism went unpunished because the perpetrators remained untraced).

Eva Duarte Peron, the formidable Evita that gave the *descamisados* (the shirtless) their dignity and an awareness of their rights, died on 26 July 1952 at the age of 33, in Buenos Aires. Thousands upon thousands came to mourn their leader and to touch her. Evita began to acquire the status of a cult figure, a demigoddess. The nervous authorities had her embalmed body stashed away in different locations in Buenos Aires before deciding to spirit her away to Germany for a secret burial, from where her body was exhumed and kept in a casket in his home at Madrid by her husband, ex-President Juan Domingo Peron. It is said that Lopez Rega, a modern day Rasputin, used to carry out certain rituals in an effort to draw some of her power and charisma into Peron's third wife Isabelita. Isabel Peron did become President of Argentina in 1973, and was deposed by General Videla and his Junta in 1976. Evita found her way to the Recoleta, a rare achievement for a commoner, born poor. I am not aware of any other place in the world that has the living frolicking so close to the dead. It is a wonderful example of mutual accommodation, demonstrating the Porteno's philosophy of live and let die.

Traditionally the Church is considered one of the three pillars of the State – the Military and the Labour Unions being the others. There are impressive cathedrals including the Metropolitan that houses the remains of the Liberator, San Martin. Though the number of churchgoers has progressively declined, and the spread of Protestant denominations has increased, Catholic fairs and festivals are popular. 44 km west of Buenos Aires is situated the impressive Cathedral of Lujan (pronounced Luhan), particularly important on St. Calletano's Day, when pilgrims converge there by bus and car. Many pilgrims walk there, some zealous ones on their knees part of the way, from all parts of the country, some having started days earlier and camped on the roadside. He is the patron saint of workers and labourers, and is one of the most popular saints in Argentina. Although protestant denominations have made quite an inroad into Catholic Latin America as well as the Nichiren School of Buddhism propagated by Daisaku Ikeda on a smaller scale, the vast majority are devout Catholics. T.A.J. Siddiqui, one of our members of the Embassy staff would sometimes go to the Islamic Centre for Friday prayers in his highnecked black sherwani (achkan). Nine times out of ten the bus drivers would refuse to take any money, saying, "Not from you, Padre". They thought he was a priest in his cassock.

According to legend, in 1630, a statue of the Virgin Mary was being transported from church to church, to a place well beyond the small town of Lujan, but the cart got stuck in the mud and despite greater effort with more men and animal the ox cart would not move. Since the Virgin had selected her home and refused to budge, the people installed the Virgin there and built a church around her. And she has remained there ever since. Some scholars say that the word "virgin" was a mistranslation in Greek, and the original Aramaic or Hebrew word meant "a young woman". Be that as it may, in Latin America the mother of Jesus is venerated more than her son. On roadsides little shrines to the Virgin Mary are not uncommon in rural communities from Peru to Patagonia.

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My predecessor's house was located in the Province of Buenos Aires, in La Lucila, about a thirty minute drive from the chancery in light traffic, and much longer during rush hours. The ambience too was somewhat depressing, so I decided to move closer to town. The newly chosen double storeyed house was built in 1928, and had a single room for a third storey. It stood sandwiched between a huge building that housed indigent women and children that suffered severe burns, and a tall apartment building. At the back a new swimming pool had been put in, and the rooms were bright and airy. It was located on Cuba Street, Belgrano C (commercial), two short blocks from the principal avenue called Cabildo. The adjacent zone to the west was Belgrano R. (residential) across a railway line. Because of its size, style and elegance, the cognoscenti say that Belgrano is not a *barrio* (neighbourhood), but a country. Belgrano and Flores were included in the federal district in 1887. From the house, it was fifteen minutes to the centre of town by car.

There are not too many of these charming old world villas left in Belgrano. In its heyday, in the early years of the twentieth century people used to come from the city to Belgrano in horse drawn tramcars, and the landed gentry in their own carriages. The tramlines are still extant, and there are many cobbled streets in Belgrano. At the end of the ninetieth century, from 1877, exporting beef and hides first, and then wool to most of Europe, the empty ships would bring back cobblestone. There was nothing Argentina needed from Europe then. It was the eighth most economically advanced country in the world. Now it is at least fifty paces behind.

To get back to the villas of Belgrano, most have been torn down to make room for multi-storeyed apartment houses. (The malaise was exacerbated in the 1990s after the initiation of President Menem's Harvard educated Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo's new policy of privatization and deregulation, one aspect of which was likened to selling off grandmother's jewellery. Many felt that big money rudely elbowed out grace and elegance as well as the middle class traders in the name of progress, and unemployment soared from 12% to 18% plus. On the other hand Cavallo's policies curbed inflation and stabilized the economy by doing away with many of the hole in the bucket state enterprises like the railways that lost a million

dollars or more a day). Today the economy is in a shambles and the people in a distressing condition.

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Mar del Plata, 400 km south of Buenos Aires, is by far the most popular seaside resort in Argentina, especially for the hoi polloi. About a hundred years ago the Portuguese had established a small town called El Puerto de Laguna de los Padres, which in the 1860s they sold to Patricio Peralta Ramos who founded Mar del Plata proper in 1874. The normal population is less than half a million but in summer the number of residents swells to two million. There are 8 km of beaches and plenty of restaurants and cinema houses. The more affluent, however, prefer to take their annual vacation at Pinamar or at Punta del Este in Uruguay, where every January one could observe droves, like beached whales or stranded penguins on the sands, worshipping the sun. "Taking the sun" is one of the most popular pastimes especially of the ladies between nine and ninety years of age. (From the 1990s on, they became a little more cautious about the sun and started using sun screen lotions more liberally, and a few of the more conscious even avoided the sun at the hottest hours).

With Dr. Mosquera Eastman, I left by Aerolineas Argentinas at 11 in the morning. After a 45-minute flight we alighted at the Mar del Plata airport. We were met by the representative of the Mayor and Jorge Srur (pronounced Horhe), organizer of the exhibition of Asian Arts and Crafts, and taken to Hotel Chateau Frontenac where I was to put up. At 6:00 in the afternoon, accompanied by Dr. Borda, President of the Argentine Asiatic Chamber of Commerce, called on the Mayor who was delayed by the sudden death of his father-in-law. The Deputy Mayor received us at the Town Hall. We signed the visitor's book and had a chat. And I was presented with a ceremonial plaque as a memento. We then returned to my hotel where the exhibition was being held, after which Jorge Srur took us out to dinner. At midnight we were taken on a conducted tour of the Casino, the biggest in the world, according to the guide. It can accommodate 60,000 persons and has 65 gaming tables in three separate areas with increasing stakes. The man incharge expatiated on the history of the casino, leading to the present position, with a nightly take of about US$ 170,000. He explained that it all goes to the Ministry of Social Welfare of the Federal Government, the unspoken grouse being that the provincial government of Buenos Aires did not get any part of it.

The Tourism department of the city sent a chauffeur driven car with a young lady guide to accompany Dr. Borda and me to a race horse breeding farm. On the way back we visited the Gaucho Museum. Gauchos, the fabled horsemen of Argentina and Uruguay, have been immortalized as Martin Fierro in the book bearing the name by the author Jose Hernandez. And though not a born gaucho, Giuseppe Garibaldi, the unifier of Italy spent more than a decade in South America from 1836 to 1848. He fought alongside the Colorados against the Blancos in the civil war in Uruguay in 1843. Then he fought for Uruguayan independence as a naval captain and defended Montevideo as a General. When he returned to Italy he continued to wear

gaucho clothes that he had got used to in Montevideo, and the red shirts that he liked, and which was associated with this soldier, one of the greatest guerrilla tacticians ever known.

The pampas are the grasslands that start outside the city of Buenos Aires, and stretch for hundreds of miles around. Over two thirds of Argentina's population lives here, the capital is here and the industries. They are the equivalent of the prairies, the downs, the steppes, the veldt and the Savannahs. In Guarani language it means flat land, and extends from the Atlantic to the Andes. However, the wet pampa is distinct from the dry and its soil is so rich in humus that even 9 feet or more deep it is still rich, and requires no artificial enrichment.

I held a press conference in the afternoon, and then was invited to a swim at Punta Iglesia by a lady journalist from the well-known newspaper Clarin, and her stepdaughter. At 7:00 in the evening, accompanied by Jorge Srur, attended a cocktail given by the Commander of the Frigate Libertad. I was piped aboard formally. A little after midnight, not at all an unusual hour in Mar del Plata, Jorge Srur with his sister and brother-in-law, invited me to the Angus restaurant for dinner. It was frequented by well-known cinema and TV personalities that my hosts went across to and chatted with or pointed out to me.

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After a day's motoring from Buenos Aires, spent the night at a pretty little town called San Luis. (Adolfo Rodriguez Saar was for 18 years Governor of the province of San Luis, with the same name as the town. He was elected interim President when De la Rua resigned in December, 2001). The next day, driving at a leisurely pace, proceeded to Mendoza city, 560 km (350 miles) from Buenos Aires at an elevation of 2480 metres at the base of the Andes mountains. The city is also named after the province. Mendoza was built in 1562 and is famous for its fruit and wine, and for the annual festival called Vendimia. In wine production Argentina is only exceeded by Italy, France and Spain.

John Gunther's account of San Martin reads:

"General San Martin, a Creole born at Yapeyu in 1778 in the Corrientes province, of which his father was the Governor, the liberator of Argentina, Chile and Peru, raised his army here. They comprised mainly Chilean and Argentine volunteers. It was from here that in 1817 he launched his expedition across the Andean ranges, to liberate Chile. He refused to accept governorship of Chile on the ground that he was nothing but a simple soldier. Cooperating with the British Admiral Cochrane, San Martin sailed upto Peru and took Lima on 12 July 1820. He proclaimed the independence of Peru and became its 'protector'." Then followed his confrontational meeting with Bolivar at Guayaquil in July 1822. San Martin, according to Ybarra in 'America Faces South', sailed away to Peru after the disappointing meeting with Bolivar, of whom he said, 'The liberator is not the man I

thought him.' Three years later he went to Europe in exile and lived in poverty in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, until his death in his daughter's arms in August 1850 at the age of 72.

Gunther continues, "San Martin was unlike Bolivar, modest, painstaking and disinterested. He cared nothing for pomp or personal aggrandizement. He was a freemason, that is, anti clerical in politics. A tall fiery-eyed man, martial in bearing, he had a magnificent bushy black beard and dark olive skin. Speaking to a group of Indians he said once, 'I too am an Indian,' although it is unknown whether he did have Indian blood. Unlike Bolivar, who became a widower in early age, he had a happy married life; when his wife Dona Remedios, died, he had the words 'wife and friend' put on her tombstone. She embroidered a flag for him when he set out for Chile, and this never left his side. San Martin traveled widely before and after his campaigns, and knew some English; he liked to make small philosophical apothegms like, 'It is the storm which brings us to port.' He was a religious person, which Bolivar (who never knew when to kneel during a church service) was not. His rank in history would probably be higher if he had cared more for politics. One well-known comment is that 'Bolivar was an eagle, San Martin was a fox.' No sooner was he dead and beyond consolation than the Argentines woke up to the immensity of their debt to him; and ever since they have vied with those honouring Bolivar in heaping tokens of affection and reverence on the memory of their national hero, the noblest and most upright of all the paladins of Latin America's epic wars of independence."

"Bolivar, the great liberator was jealous of San Martin", says Ibarra. "When his dream of a United South America was shattered with bickering and revolts, he left his native land in despair, only to return in a coffin. Ill and penniless, and bitter to the end, surrounded by only a few friends, he found shelter in the house of a generous admirer. At the age of 47, on 17 December, 1830, he died, clad in a borrowed night shirt."

Since 1913, the wine harvest festival called Vendimia held from end February to early March, has been an annual feature of Mendozan life, and an experience not to be missed. Floats are taken out in procession in the city and a beauty pageant is held in each department (district) of the province. Ultimately the finalists parade at a large amphitheatre among thousands of keen spectators and the Vendimia Queen is elected and crowned in the deep of a star studded night with pomp and pageantry.

One morning, with Quinteros the driver confidently behind the wheel, the Mercedes effortlessly wended its way among the Andean Cordillera toward the Chilean border. After a sudden steep climb we got to the statue of El Cristo Redentor, at a height of 3854 metres. The statue was erected on the frontier between Argentina and Chile, in 1902, after a border dispute had been settled. The wind blew cold, strong and uncomfortable and we hurriedly left the forlorn sentinel to peace. We then proceeded to the yellow – brown natural stone bridge over Rio Mendoza. 2720 metres above sea level and 177 km from Mendoza city, it is one of Argentina's

natural wonders. From here expeditions leave for Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas. Looking up the road towards the border, I saw a strange elongated off white concertina, or so it seemed. I was informed that these caterpillar look alikes were actually garages for the trains during winter, to protect the bogeys against snow. It is a great pity that the Trans Andean passenger train service from Argentina to Chile has been suspended for some years. A small branch line service exists in the remote northwest of Argentina to Antofagasta, the largest city in northern Chile, but it is only a freight train and takes goods from Salta to Socompa; the bit to Antofagasta is not regular. I understand the Trans–Andean railway journey was breathtakingly fascinating amidst majestic mountain scenery.

Mendoza is also well known for its leather products. I bought some jackets for my children and one for myself. Amongst the restaurants, I also visited La Casona, and tasted Mendozan wine while I watched a good looking husky voiced woman crooner imported from Buenos Aires titillating the audience. Some of them went into transports of joy at the faster paced *milongas* and *chamame*, and even imbibed melancholic pleasure at the more sombre *tangos*. On 25 February 1982, at 8:30 in the morning left for Buenos Aires, just over 900 km away. Reached San Rafael after four hours. Two famous wines are produced here from local vineyards, Suter and Bianchi – fine white wines, the latter a touch drier. After lunch we pushed on to Buenos Aires.

In many parts of the world tango signifies the dance with fancy steps only. In Argentina the tango is first and foremost the haunting song, melancholic, of love unrequited, of separation, or the cry for the unattainable, all outpourings of the tormented soul crying out for love. Even the less intense themes are nostalgic poetry. Only the second meaning of the tango is the dance, which when executed well, is a flowing poem of movement, fluid, melting, fiercely passionate. You have to go to La Boca area of Buenos Aires to savour tango, often a group of three, two singers and a man playing the *bandoneon*, the Argentine button accordion, with which nowadays (1982) Astor Piazzola is the reigning tango maestro. If you venture into the pubs and nightspots at San Telmo, another ancient neighbourhood, you would hear and see tango, the songs and an occasional dance in a number of dimly lit cafes. And you would get acquainted with the cult of Gardel, the founder of tango. Gardel is so revered that people go to his tomb in the Chacarita cemetery and offer flowers and touch his gravesite and offer prayers, not only on his birth or death anniversary, but on any day. He is one of "Los Inmortales" of Argentina.

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At 11:10 am on 15 March, took off on an Air France flight that arrived at Santiago at 12 noon local time, 1 pm Argentine time. Along with the representative of the Foreign Ministry I was received by an Iranian, Abdullah, who apparently was considered as the closest substitute for a Pakistani in the Chilean capital by the Protocol Department. We went to the elegant old Hotel Carrera in Abdullah's Mercedes 280. The following day Abdullah accompanied me to the Foreign Minister's office at 12:45 in the afternoon. We were met by the Chief of Protocol,

and I was conducted to the Foreign Minister, to whom I presented copies of my letters of credence and of my predecessor's recall.

After the formal call, went with Abdullah to the forested San Cristobal hill at one end of the city. A funicular rail car took us to the top. At the peak there is a colossal statue of the Virgin Mary. Terraced gardens on the slopes added colour. Below lay the fourth largest city in South America, Santiago de Chile. Positioned in a bowl, with towering mountains all around, the smog had no way of escape. Setting up factories all over the place in bygone years has produced environmental pollution to the extent that Santiago, an otherwise beautiful city, is encased in smog most of the year. To try to reduce the sorry condition the city fathers have tried various measures. One of them was to permit cars with even number plates in the city on certain days only and odd numbered on the other days. The smog has lessened only slightly and is still an unpleasant and hazardous phenomenon. They have to shift some of the smoke spitting factories outside and away, or modernize them, either of which is naturally an expensive exercise.

On 17 March, accompanied by their Deputy Chief of Protocol in a special car with motorcycle outriders, proceeded to the Moneda Palace. This building still bears bullet marks of the 11 September 1973 military coup against Salvador Allende, who had narrowly won the 4 September 1970 elections and had been elected President of Chile. The Air Force had strafed the building in a combined Army–Air Force operation that culminated in the death of President Allende, who was considered to be too leftist for the good of the nation by the army chief, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte and the top brass of the services.

This type of violence, though infrequent, was not wholly unprecedented in South America. In June 1955 in an attempt to get rid of President Juan Domingo Peron, Argentine naval planes had bombed the President House, Casa Rosada, in Buenos Aires. Simultaneously, troops had attacked it from the streets. More than 300 people were killed but the coup failed. Peron had escaped minutes before the attack. However, in September 1955 Naval forces moved against him and Peron surrendered without a fight. He took flight, falling into the water in his haste while boarding a Paraguayan gunboat, thence to exile abroad.

At 12:30 pm, after a guard of honour, I was conducted to President Pinochet at the end of a large ornate gold and red chamber. By Chilean custom, an Ambassador presenting credentials had to make a set opening speech in Spanish. In my case I read out the Spanish version of, "I have the honour to present to Your Excellency," etc., etc., without actually understanding all the words. Then I spoke to the President in English and he replied to me in Spanish translated by an elegantly suited lady interpreter. We exchanged courtesies, after which he expressed some concern about the Afghanistan situation, particularly when I informed him that we had taken in more than two million refugees.

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President Menem of Argentina, Ambassador of Egypt (Centre) and Raja Tridiv Roy May 1995

Raja Tridiv Roy: With President George Bush Sr. when he visited Argentina
On right is Finance & Economy Minister Domingo Caballo

CHAPTER II

Malvinas / Falklands Invasion

Around 2:00 am, on 2 April 1982, under orders from the new President, General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri, Argentine forces invaded the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands). Apparently, Galtieri's single biggest miscalculation was his disregard for Margaret Thatcher's waning popularity in England. He provided her a handle for bolstering her flagging popularity and a springboard for getting re-elected. Had he initiated hostilities after the general elections in England, it is not all that certain that the new government would have gone to war over the all but forgotten outcrop of rocks and still less remembered inhabitants of British and Norwegean descent called Kelpers – a handful, less than two thousand in all.

The second error was to believe that the United States would remain neutral. Some feel that had he a little more political acumen Galtieri would have in any case withdrawn after capturing the islands. The action would have focused attention and facilitated proforma and moribund debates at the UN. The news was generally received with great rejoicing. It is a matter of national pride and honour. Argentines strongly believe that the Malvinas are theirs and that a hundred and fifty years earlier, on 2 January 1833, the English had forcefully and illegally driven out the Argentine garrison and taken possession of these isolated windswept Argentine islands in the desolate South Atlantic, where there are thousands of sheep and only a few human beings. It was and is a national objective to regain sovereignty over the islands.

The English had in two consecutive years in the first decade of the 19th century, in 1806 and 1807 invaded Buenos Aires, to be repelled totally on both occasions, in what came to be known as the Reconquista. However, Argentines are not unmindful of British contributions. They introduced the railways and football among so many other useful things that are now taken for granted. John Gunther, in his "Inside South America", writes:

"Sir David Kelly, a former British Ambassador to Argentine, once wrote the following: The British horse was followed in 1826 by the all British "Racing Club". In 1827 John Miller imported the first Shorthorn – Miller's estancia is still British owned. In 1844 Richard Newton set up the first wire fence – a typical feature of the Argentine landscape. The first steamship to arrive at Buenos Aires was the Royal Mail Esk in 1851. In 1874 a British *Estancia*, Mr. Sherman's El Negrete, saw the first sheep-dip and the first game of polo. The first Aberdeen – Angus was imported by Mr. Grant in 1876. It sounds incredible, but it's true that the following were started by British capital and engineers: gas, electric light, the meat packing industry, agricultural and industrial machinery, insurance, banks, tramways, telephones, telegrams, wireless; and so, incidentally, were football, rugby, rowing, tennis, golf, polo and boxing. I have left to the last the most important of all, the railways, on

which the whole modern development depended. At the very end, out of 26,800 miles of railways, 20,000 were British owned.

All told, British investments in Argentina, much greater than American, came close to half a billion pounds sterling in the 1940's; they have declined since. Italy replaced Britain to become Argentina's best customer in 1963, with West Germany close behind. As to imports Argentina's principal suppliers are the United States, West Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom in that order".

And Argentines do have a generally good feeling toward 'Los Ingleses'. The Anglo Argentine Community consists, among others, of some of the biggest landowners in Argentina, some of whom own immense tracts of land used for rearing cattle, and sheep in Southern Patagonia. Nearer to the capital, 500 km to the south, near the seaside town of Necochea, a family of Scots descent whose wealth emanated from extensive agricultural lands and beef cattle had an annual bash to one of which I was invited. It was quite an affair, with the Lord of the manor, an Oxford graduate and the President of the Oxbridge Association of Argentina, dressed in a kilt. Another family member played the bagpipe as he marched up and down the terrace. I could have been in one of the affluent estates in Scotland, in the prewar days or perhaps a century earlier. The family's wealth was based on extensive agricultural lands and beef cattle.

Argentines can never agree on anything. There are, however, two exceptions. One is that the Islas Malvinas belong to Argentina. The second is that when He was creating the world God made Argentina and gave it every good thing one could possibly want. Then, in order to effect an equilibrium, God created the Argentines. Most Latin Americans think that the Argentines consider themselves the cat's whiskers. On their part, the Argentines feel that not only are they the whiskers, but the whole cat. And like Lewis Carroll's cat in Wonderland, when it disappears entirely, they are the grin that remains.

The euphoria continued and when the authorities asked for help in the war effort ladies queued up and eagerly donated valuable ornaments. Some of the gold and precious stones were diverted, it was said, and did not reach their destination. The English, on their part, mobilized their forces and even converted the luxurious cruise ship Queen Elizabeth 2 into a troop carrier. Once in 1975, I had boarded the QE2 in New York and headed for Southampton. It was five days of fun and leisure that I would love to avail again, any time. To think of this pleasure palace being used as an instrument of war was a sad thought. I am glad that after the war it was again outfitted for pleasure cruises.

About the situation obtaining during the *proceso*, the rule of the military, from 1976 to 1983, and the Malvinas/Falkland war, in their book "Argentina Uruguay and Paraguay", Bernhardson and Massolo have this to say: "Despite public homage to economic growth and stabilization, Argentina's economy continued to decline during military rule. On the one hand, the government enacted strict

monetarist economic measures, including a fixed exchange rate to eliminate speculation on the dollar, but failed to reduce annual inflation below triple digits. It did, however, increase unemployment and undermine local industry through cheap imports. Its lip service to austerity brought in billions of dollars in loans which were invested in grandiose public works projects such as the nearly unused toll highway between downtown Buenos Aires and Ezeiza Airport, while public officials pocketed much of the money and sent it overseas to Swiss bank accounts. The military acquired the latest in European technology, including the deadly Exocet missile.

Under the weight of its import splurge and the burden of debt, the Argentine economy collapsed in chaos. Almost overnight, devaluation reduced the peso to a fraction of its former value, and inflation again reached astronomical, rather than merely high levels. The Proceso was coming undone. In an orderly transition in early 1981, General Roberto Viola replaced General Videla as de facto president, but Viola's ineffectuality caused his replacement by General Leopoldo Galtieri before the end of the year. Under Galtieri, rapid economic deterioration and popular discontent, manifested in the first mass demonstrations at the Casa Rosada since before the 1976 coup, led to desperate measures. To stay in power, Galtieri launched an April 1982 invasion of the Falkland Islands, claimed by Argentina as the Malvinas for nearly a century and a half.

Overnight, the nearly unopposed occupation of the Malvinas unleashed a wave of nationalist euphoria, which subsided almost as fast as it crested. Galtieri underestimated the determined response of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, herself in political difficulties, and the ability of Britain's naval task force to absorb heavy losses to attain a remote goal. On 2 May 1982, the British submarine HMS Conqueror torpedoed ARA General Belgrano. Out of 1093 soldiers and sailors on board 323 died. After only 74 days, Argentina's ill-trained, poorly motivated and ineffective forces surrendered ignominiously and the military meekly prepared to return government to civilian hands. In 1983, Argentines elected Raul Alfonsin, of the Radical Civic Union, to the presidency.

Aftermath

In his presidential campaign, Alfonsin pledged to try those military officers responsible for human rights violations during the Dirty War. Junta members, including Videla, Viola and Admiral Emilio Massera, were tried and convicted of kidnap, torture and homicide. Evidence uncovered by the commission, which produced the report *Nunca Mas* was critical in their convictions. Videla and Massera received life sentences, though in virtual luxury accommodation in a military prison.

When the government attempted to extend trials to junior officers, many of whom protested that they had been merely 'following orders', those officers responded with uprisings in several different parts of the country. These might have toppled the government, but if more forcefully resisted might have permanently subjugated the military to civilian control. The timid administration succumbed to

military demands and produced a Law of Due Obedience which eliminated prosecutions of notorious individuals such as Navy Captain Alfredo Astiz (the 'Angel of Death'), who was implicated in the disappearance of a Swedish-Argentine teenager and other crimes including the disappearance of two French nuns during the dirty war.

The Law of Due Obedience did not eliminate the divisive impact of the Dirty War on Argentine politics. Since 1987, the Argentine military has reasserted its role in Argentine politics despite internal factionalism. One especially disconcerting element has been emergence of the overtly fascist *carapintada* movement of disaffected junior officers. In December 1990, prior to the visit of United States President George Bush, the carapintadas (so-called after their custom of painting their faces with camouflage markings) occupied army headquarters across from the Casa Rosada and elsewhere in Buenos Aires in the hope of encouraging the military establishment to join them in overthrowing President Carlos Menem, himself a prisoner of the military during the Dirty War.

Ironically, Menem himself contributed to the controversy. Just after Christmas of 1990, he pardoned Videla, Massera and others despite overwhelming evidence that the Argentine public opposed such measures. He also pardoned former Montonero guerrilla leader Mario Firmenich who, some speculated, still had access to substantial funds which might benefit Menem's Peronist party. At present, no one anticipates overt military domination of Argentina, but the spectre of military intervention has not disappeared."

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In early April 1982 I was in Lima, Peru, to present my credentials. Lima was the dominant city of South America, the seat of the Viceroyalty, for about three hundred years. In Quechua language, Rimac, on which is based the name Lima, means "River that speaks." People generally avoided moving around at night in fear of the Sendero Luminoso, the Shining Path leftist guerrillas, who bombed public buildings, power lines, shopping centres, and occasionally hotels too, as a variation to the theme.

Preponderance of the population comprises the two main indigenous peoples, the Quechua and the Aymara. "No one has seen poverty who has not been on the PUNA," it is said. "The peons work in the fields and pastures twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day, are stunted in growth, and numbed by the altitude. They drink Chichi, fermented corn beer, and chew coca leaves. To release the narcotic in coca it is necessary to make the raw leaf alkaline, so the leaves are usually mixed with ashes or a powder made of calcium rock." (John Gunther). Again quoting Gunther, in the mid 1960s: "Ranked by value the principal exports are non-ferrous metals, fodder, petroleum, and fish ..... And 50,000 monkeys a year and an equal number of multi-coloured tropical birds." " 'Sugar runs this country'. It is the biggest 'political industry' and the properties near Trijillo comprise the largest concentration of sugar

cultivation in the world."

On the other extreme we have Miguel Mujica Gallo's Gold Museum in Lima, with a magnificent collection of coins, arms, gold, and works of art; and the Archbishop's palace. The Presidency, built by Pizarro, has a room where 350 persons can sit down to dinner. Amongst the great buildings is the cathedral where the mummified body of Pizarro lies, though some doubt the authenticity of the claim. There is a fig tree said to be planted by Pizarro, still flourishing in the Palace compound. Gunther says, "In 1965 guerrilla bands began attacking large landed properties in the Cusco area. One of the principal power factors is the landed oligarchy or the forty families. 82.6 per cent of land is owned by 7266 owners, 0.8 per cent of total landowners. The remaining 17.4 per cent of land is owned by 871,401 holders. One hacienda is a third of the size of Cuba."

It is all the more a pity that such a lot of people in Peru have to go hungry when the world is beholden to this great country for the gift of the potato of which there are over a thousand varieties in Peru itself. In point of fact 80% of the 3500 genotypes of tuber bearing yams and potatoes in South America is indigenous to Peru and Bolivia.

On 5 April, I called on the Foreign Minister. We talked of the Malvinas war and he said a meeting of Ministers of the Organization of American States would discuss the matter. The Chief of Protocol briefed me about the ceremony tomorrow. I will be escorted from Hotel Bolivar at 11 a m According to Peruvian custom all Ambassadors, irrespective of their place of residence, are escorted from the Hotel Bolivar to the Presidential Palace, where the guards march the goose step.

On 6 April, after being ceremonially escorted from the Bolivar Hotel to the Presidential Palace, I presented my credentials and letter of recall of my predecessor, Ambassador S.A. Pasha, to the President, Architecto Fernando Belaunde Terry. He spoke excellent English, having been educated in the States, and we had a pleasant conversation after the presentation. On return to the Sheraton Hotel I offered champagne to the Chief of Protocol and the escorting military officers, as is customary.

In Latin America the prefix Dr. Ing. (Engineer) Aqto. (Architect), Contador (Chartered Accountant), is de rigueur. All lawyers write Doctor before their name, or Doctora if a female, on obtaining a bachelor of law degree. A PhD of course also writes Dr. If in England a medical doctor, that is a physician, uses the title doctor, why does the surgeon, even when he is a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, only write Mr.? Solely to differentiate from the Barber surgeons? Every Society must be permitted its own quirks, otherwise the world would be flat and monotonous and we might even fall asleep and fall off the edge.

On 8 April, in the morning took the plane to Cusco. I am putting up at the only multi starred hotel, Bolivar Holiday Inn. After a nap I went on a tour with guide

Rosa in a microbus. We started at 2:00 pm and returned at 5:00. Being at an elevation of 3310 metres above sea level, it does not help to move abruptly. One has to make all movements gently, or one gets out of breath.

Many people have coca leaves in their mouth rolled into a ball, which they masticate slowly, from time to time. It helps stave off hunger pangs as well as in acting as a mild sedative, to make life easier in the barren, rocky highlands. The people are generally small in stature and squat of build, like many hillpeople in Asia, and suffer from malnutrition due to extreme poverty. A few peasants have pocket-handkerchief sized holdings called minifundios on which they grow maize and vegetables, and some raise llamas, alpacas and vicunas, the indigenous variety of the camel family. Excepting the few oligarchic families, and prosperous businessmen, Peruvians by and large are poor. Tourism fortunately helps to bring a minimal dose of economic activity to the Cusco region.

Cusco was the capital of the Incas. Huyana Capac, the Inca, reigned from 1485 to 1525. On the eve of Pizarro's arrival from Panama, Huyana Capac's sons, half brothers, reigned from two capitals. The Southern at Cusco was under the Inca Huasco, and the Northern part of the Inca Empire was under the control of Atahualpa, whose seat was Quito, capital of present day Ecuador. The two fought a fratricidal war and Huasco was taken prisoner. Huasco was the last Cusco Inca Emperor, having reigned from 1525 to 1530. Over the centuries there reigned twelve Inca rulers, one after the other, starting from Manco Capac, the first Inca at the end of the 11th Century.

In the days of Queen Victoria's Empire the postman used to carry mail in stages of nine miles, in a jog trot. "In the name of the Empress of India make way," wrote the poet Rudyard Kipling, of the postman as he jogged the distance with the mailbag slung across his back, all across the subcontinent of India. Every nine miles there would be a rest house – the *dak* (mail) bungalow that provided accommodation to the touring district officers of the British Raj.

Flornoy writes: "In the Inca empire he was called a CHASKI and he carried the message in his memory. Every three miles was his beat and it ended at a stone house, the CHUCLA, where a team of couriers waited day and night. The runner had to pass on the information with exactitude; he need not understand the import but must faithfully and without any error transmit the message. It contained information about harvests, wars, births, the King's Orders. These runners needed only three days from Cusco to Lima, a distance of about six hundred miles.

After defeating and imprisoning Huasco, Atahualpa ruled the whole Inca Empire until he in turn was captured and after a proforma trial executed by strangulation by the perfidious Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro. Huasco was killed after the imprisonment of Atahualpa by Pizarro, according to Prescott, so although Atahualpa was blamed some think it was Pizarro who had had him killed.

Atahualpa, himself a prisoner, denied having had Huasco murdered. John Gunther in his "Inside South America", writes:

"Pizarro, a ratlike grasping little man who conquered Peru with 183 men, betrayed and destroyed the Inca King in 1533. In speed bite and comprehensiveness, the Spanish advance was unprecedented. There has been nothing like it. With minuscule handfuls of troops the Conquistadors established the rule of Spain over almost an eighth of the earth's surface in a quarter of a century. They built monasteries, palaces, universities; cities like Quito (founded 1534) and Lima (1535) preceded the establishment of the first North American outposts by almost a hundred years; the University of San Marcos in Peru was founded almost a century before Harvard, in 1551 as against 1636. Resistance by the Indians who of course did not have firearms, and who were peaceably inclined, was hopeless, and about 200,000 Spaniards conquered between 25 and 30 million of them. Not less than 20000,000, Indians were killed according to one estimate. It was the greatest blitz in history after Genghis Khan."

Flornoy, in "The World of the Inca" writes: "When Charles the fifth learned of the Inca's death he reproached Pizarro. 'The death of Atahualpa a man of high degree, has much displeased me, especially because it was the result of a court decision'. But those who arranged the trial at Cajamarca had defeated true justice. However these rude soldiers paid for their excesses. Francisco Pizarro died at the hand of an assassin in his palace at Lima, Diego de Almagro was strangled in prison at Cusco. Almagro, his son, was executed four years after the death of his father. Gonzalo Pizarro, the Governor's brother, was executed. Carvajal was hanged and quartered, Garcia de Alvarado assassinated.

In the book which slipped from Atahualpa's hand on to the ground where he died, the Conquistadors could have read this warning: 'He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword.'

In the whole of Latin America, much like the greater part of Asia, people generally are not bothered about punctuality. If one is a stickler one is apt to develop ulcers. Guests often arrive one hour or more after the specified time, at a dinner party, with nary a word of contrition, quite offhand in fact. They say that the only thing that runs on time in the whole of Peru is the train that leaves Cusco for Machu Picchu. However, nobody can guarantee the arrival time at the end of the journey. The train that day took six hours because it was stranded for about two hours en route. An immense boulder had rolled on to the rail and blocked the path of the train. At a number of places the train had to go backward and then forward in a 'Z' in order to negotiate a climb that reminded me of my school days in Kurseong, Darjeeling. Of the Cusco to Machu Picchu trip Gunther writes: "At the end of the line the traveler arrives somewhat breathless, takes a bus on a road which seems to be almost diabolically set with precipitous zigzag turns, each sharper than the last." Nerve-rackingly true, indeed.

"Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Incas, at an elevation of 11,480 feet, is seventy miles north of Cusco. It was discovered in 1911 by Hiram Bingham, 'a youthful Yale professor'. President Belaunde Terry is quoted by Gunther as saying; 'The builder does not destroy the topography, but seems to caress it'. It may have been a summer capital for Inca rulers, a fortress, or perhaps a retreat for youthful virgins dedicated to the sun. Out of 173 skeletons discovered, 150 are of women, an unusual proportion. Machu Picchu contains palaces, aqueducts, observation towers, dwellings, and no less than 100 stairways, containing 3000 perfectly fitting stone steps. How men managed to build all this by hand is a mystery. This imperishable structure dates from the 11th century A.D., and is, in a literal sense, one of the wonders of the world."

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On 23 April, left for Guayaquil, chief seaport of Ecuador, at 10:30 am, on a five and a half hour flight from Buenos Aires. At two degrees South of the equator, it lies near the mouth of the Guayas river and exports lots of bananas and Panama hats. The city was founded on St. James' Day 1531, and is said to be named after a couple, GUAYAS and QUIL. Long before the arrival of the Spanish explorer Francisco de Orellana, around 2000 BC the Valdivia people inhabited the region. After them lived here the Huancavileas. Legend has it that their Chief, Guayas, killed his beautiful wife Quil, then drowned himself rather than fall into the hands of the conquering Spaniards.

The historic meeting between Simon Bolivar and San Martin took place here in July 1822, on the river Guayas. Panama hats are made in Ecuador from a fibre derived from the leaves of a plant called Toquilla (Carludovica palmat) and woven into hats by moonlight especially in Montecristo and Jipijapa and shipped to Panama, where the market for them is located. Panama hats are not made in Panama at all. Cotopaxi – world's highest active volcano at 19360 feet (5897 metres), 833 miles away, and the Chimborazo, at 20556 ft (6267 metres) are both located in Ecuador. They are the third and second highest mountains respectively, in South America, the loftiest being Aconcagua in Argentina.

On 25 April, at 7:00 a m left for Quito in a Ford Microbus rented for a hundred and fifty dollars. The driver Jorge Rubio was accompanied by his English-speaking daughter, Tatiana. On the way to Quito we crossed three rivers, and a bridge that is said to be the longest in South America. The highest point on the road was at an elevation of 4000 metres. Passed the towns of Riobamba and Ambato. The Quechua people of Chimborazo region are noted for their valour and spirit. They are revolutionaries who revolted against the oppression of the settlers in 1764, 1778 and 1803. Quechuans of different regions and countries speak their own version of the language and intercommunication between different groups is in Spanish.

Reached Colon Hotel in Quito at 4:30 p m Quito is a picturesque city, 2850 metres high in the Andes, nestling in a basin amidst the mountains. It was an ancient

Inca city, rebuilt in 1534 by one of Pizarro's Lieutenants, a year or two before Lima was founded. The towering peak is called Cerro Panecillo where there is a statue of the Virgin of the Americas. At the heart of the city is a cathedral in grey stone, and green cupolas. Inside is the tomb of General Sucre who had led the independence troops to victory against colonial Spain. The oldest church in South America, San Francisco, is in Quito – built in 1534 on the site of the old Inca palace under the direction of the Flemish missionary Fray Jodoco Ricke.

At 9:00 pm went out for dinner with Rubio and Tatiana. Only snack bars were open at this hour. It is obviously a more conservative city than Guayaquil. The temperature is 11 degrees Celsius although we are only 14 miles (22 km) from the Equator.

The following afternoon called on Ambassador Valdiviers, at the Foreign Ministry. The Director of Protocol at 4:20 pm took me to the Deputy Foreign Minister to whom I gave the letter of credence for me and letter of recall for Ambassador Pasha.

In Washington there was a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States. In the Malvinas war 200 Argentine soldiers were said to have been captured by the British.

On 27 April, at 11:30 am presented credentials to the President of Ecuador. The Ambassador of Denmark followed, shortly after.

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On 30 April, Secretary of State Al Haig, having failed to bring about a negotiated settlement, or a ceasefire, (and having put satellites in position in the South Atlantic so as to help Britain with vital information, according to some Argentines) has declared US support for Britain. Having left Miami for Santiago at 11:00 pm the previous night, the Pan Am plane had perforce to land at Mendoza at 7:00 am on 1 May due to foul weather in Santiago, despite having been denied permission by the Argentine authorities, who were peeved with the US for having sided with Britain. The plane was immediately surrounded by armed Argentine soldiers, a couple of whom menacingly climbed aboard. After some time, on instructions from Buenos Aires, being a passenger carrying unarmed civilian aircraft, the plane was allowed to proceed on its scheduled flight to Santiago de Chile, when the weather there had cleared.

The British have started bombing Stanley, the capital of Malvinas again, after a respite of two or three days. The poor recruits. It is all about town that the vast majority of soldiers sent to fight this war are conscripts and only a smattering of regular well-trained soldiers have been deployed. Despite the bravado over the radio and TV, news pouring in tell a sorry tale of the ill equipped and ill trained rookies, confronting well trained battle hardened British soldiers, especially the renowned

Gurkhas. In the whole war though, many Argentine soldiers fought bravely. The Air Force fought brilliantly, and the real heroes were the Ace pilots. The Navy too did its share. The most controversial, and to many, an inexcusable act of perfidy was the British sinking of the troop carrier 'General Belgrano' with over three hundred soldiers and naval personnel on 2 May 1982, in an area outside the Exclusion Zone and especially when it was moving away from the direction of the Falklands/Malvinas. In any case this was the outraged perception in Argentina.

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In football, Uruguay was Olympic champion twice and twice world champion. The first World Cup tournament in fact took place in the Uruguayan capital Montevideo in 1930, with 13 teams participating. It is one of the smaller South American countries but is larger than Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark combined. With a population just under three million in 1981, the population density was double that of South America as a whole. It draws the largest number of tourists in the continent, save Brazil perhaps, and its GNP per capita is second in the whole of Latin America, exceeded only by Argentina. Its literacy rate is the highest in the South American Continent at 94.3%.

On 12 May, at 4:00 pm in a ceremonial convoy of cars and outriders proceeded to the Presidential Palace opposite the Victoria Plaza Hotel, across the paved Square with its impressive statue of the national hero Artegas. The journey was of about three minutes' duration. After being received at the entrance, with ceremonial guards lining the red-carpeted walk, our procession solemnly stepped forward. We climbed the stairs and proceeded along a long hall, with the Chief of Protocol beside me. At the other end I saw four men in military uniform, standing stiff and straight. With the light shining from behind them, no one's features were clearly discernible. I was not sure which was the President.

As we approached from the other end of the hall, without moving my head, and looking straight ahead, I whispered, "which is the President?" The seasoned Chief of Protocol, without breaking stride or turning his head whispered back from the side of his mouth, like Humphrey Bogart playing a detective, "second from the right". I proceeded, now more relaxed, and presented my credentials to the right person. After this there was the usual exchange of courtesies and everything went off normally.

Uruguay is perhaps the only country in South America that does not give the representative of the Holy See, automatically, the position of Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps. Uruguay has a secular constitution, and though the majority of the population is Catholic, in matters of state, and law, no religion is pre-eminent. In other countries of Latin America the Pope's representative is the Doyen of the Corps from the day he presents credentials. Perhaps the other exception is Cuba, but then that is in the Caribbean. The Uruguayan is somewhat a different kettle of fish from the Argentine. An old joke has it that if an Argentine says he has ten million dollars,

he probably has one. If an Uruguayan says he has a million, he probably has ten. While we are on jokes about countries, there was one joke about Bolivia (sometime later), but it was more at the expense of President Menem. The story goes like this. The Argentine President is on a visit to La Paz and is presented the Cabinet Ministers one by one. "And this is my Minister for the Navy," says the President of Bolivia. "The Navy?" exclaims President Menem, incredulous. "How can you have a navy in a landlocked country?"

"Mr. President", answers the Bolivian President equably, "If you can have a Minister for Justice, why can't I have one for the Navy?"

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On 1 June, in Buenos Aires, Retired General Reynaldo Bignone was sworn in as the new President of Argentina. In the third week of June I went on a Caribbean tour as a Special Envoy on a vote gathering mission. On Air Florida, the first stop was at Guatemala City. However, passengers remained on board as Guatemala does not recognize Belize, where we were headed for, which it considers to be a British creation out of its own territory. We next touched Belize. The Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs received me at the foot of the stairs of the plane. I am at the cosy Fort George, a little hotel by the sea. A car has been placed at my disposal and the driver took me for a drive around town at 6:00 pm.

The Foreign Secretary came to the hotel at 2:20 pm the next day. Went with him to call on Prime Minister Price at his office at the top of the Treasury Building. He was already committed to support the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, so I persuaded him to support us after the first ballot at the UN. He was a pleasant, unpretentious gentleman. At 9:30 pm went for a drive in the taxi allotted to me to take me around (at my expense). Today being Wednesday the Prime Minister spends it with his constituents, outside the capital. The capital has been shifted to the interior, to Belmopan, 52 miles away.

On 24 June, the Foreign Secretary saw me off on a flight to Tegucigalpa. At the Honduran capital I am putting up at the Maya Honduras Hotel. One dollar here equals two Lempiras, more or less the same as in Belize. Called on the Foreign Minister. It was a good meeting. In the afternoon went to a Chinese restaurant. It happened to be the proprietor's birthday and a live band serenaded him, a custom not confined to the Caribbean but prevalent in Colombia and a few other countries in South America.

Went sightseeing and also to the Sunday market where I purchased a beautiful hand woven long sleeved shirt. It was woven by a girl named Natividad Chen in three months, working eight hours a day. She belongs to the indigenous Cakchikel people of the zone Quezalte – Nanqo. One hand woven piece was 50 Quetzale. One Quetzale is equivalent to one dollar. The travel agent Jaoqin came to see me at 4:00 pm and was quite helpful. I bought a few precious pieces of the

colourful, predominantly red, hand woven cotton material. It is a pity the baggage containing them disappeared at the airport at Port au Spain, Trinidad.

On 28 June in Guatemala City I had a successful meeting at the Foreign Ministry at 10:00 am. The Guatemalan Foreign Minister also agreed to canvass other countries on Pakistan's behalf for the Security Council seat at the UN. At lunch had a typical Guatemalan dish, very rich with rice, beans and meat. In the evening went to see a Robert de Niro flic called 'Taxi Driver'.

After touring Panama and Santo Domingo, on 2 July left for Puerto Rico. On the flight we hit a number of air pockets, the biggest a drop of 500 feet or so, quite a scary experience. The country's beauty queen, Miss Dominican Republic, was also on this flight and did not demonstrate any lack of composure. After the scare, the flight was smooth again and we landed at our destination in Central Puerto Rico without further excitement. Here customs and immigration formalities were completed. Then a half hour flight took me to San Juan, the capital of the island of Puerto Rico. While in Puerto Rico, went on a tour that included a beach and a national park in the Rain Forest at a height of 3500 feet.

One afternoon I went to see a cockfight at a club near the airport. It is a national sport and people gamble and bet with great enthusiasm. It reminded me of cockfights of my childhood days. Of course ours were out in the open and the roosters were chosen at random in old Rangamati, long before the Kaptai dam submerged the place. Here the cockfights were held in an indoor stadium, and the birds seemed trained and composed like professional fighters, like boxers at Madison Square Garden or sumo wrestlers in a ring in the Ginza.

From Puerto Rico I flew to St. John's, capital of Antigua, (pronounced Antiga) and was received by a lady from the Protocol Department, with a car and a helpful policeman driver. They drove me to the Hawksbill Hotel, on the beach among palm trees.

Went with Mrs. Pereira of the Protocol Department to call on Sanders, the Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister-cum-Foreign Minister, Bird. The Prime Minister has two sons, one of whom is a Minister and another an elected Member of Parliament. Antigua has a population of about 70,000. The other island pertaining to this nation is Berbuda, with a few thousand inhabitants. The people wanted an independent status from Britain, and got it. I also called on the Deputy Prime Minister who was supportive. Went on a tour of the Island, and had two refreshing dips in the sea, at 7:00 in the morning and another at 7:00 in the evening. In between I went on a tour of the 108 sq mile island. Everywhere you go the sea is in sight. One dollar equals 2.60 Antiguan dollars.

In the LIAT Airlines flew to Saint Lucia (pronounced Looshia) after two stops on the way. Ms Marie Hippolyte of the Foreign Ministry received me. Called on G.M. Compton, Prime Minister cum Foreign Minister, and then on Earl Huntley,

Permanent Secretary. Later met the Prime Minister again at the Barbados national day reception. Called on the Venezuelan Ambassador. He is the only resident foreign ambassador here so the local Foreign Office arranged this call. I had met him and his wife at the Canadian reception yesterday, after the Barbados reception. At 6:00 pm had a delightful swim in the sea. At 7:30 pm attended the rum punch party given by the management of the hotel. The Manager, an Englishman, invited Mrs. Jackson and her friend and me to the village. There was a local dance show including the Limbo, which was danced with complete insouciance by a rather plump young woman, apparently made out of rubber, without any bones.

The Protocol lady took me to the airport the next day but we found the Air Martinique counter deserted. When the man in charge turned up, to his surprise and our consternation, it was discovered that the flight on which I was booked had arrived before schedule and had taken off. The Protocol lady, Marie, promised me she was going to take up the matter with the government. Woe-betide the Airways, was the implication. I was advised to buy a new ticket at LIAT for 54 dollars for Barbados where I would have to spend the night and then proceed to St. Vincent. The flight was scheduled to take off at 8:00 pm. I went back to my hotel in town to while away the time.

On 12 July, my flight to St. Vincent arrived at 6:50 am. I proceeded to the Cobblestone Inn. At 9:45 am an escort accompanied me to the Foreign Ministry where I had a successful meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. St. Vincent is 133 sq. miles and the Grenadines 17 sq. miles, total 150 sq. miles. The Grenadines comprise Bequia, Canonan, Mayreau, Mustique, Prince Island, Petite St. Vincent and Union Island. The population is 106 thousand. One US dollar equals 2.70 local currency. St. Vincent, Saint Lucia, Antigua, each of these tiny island nations has one vote in the UN, the same as the US or the Russian Federation.

I left Port au Spain without any baggage and also without my brown attaché case, which had been booked in with the suitcases. At Paramaribo I was received by protocol people and had dinner at Hotel Suriname Torarica, where I am staying. The next morning I went and bought some clothes and other essential items before calling on the genial Governor General who is a Christian and originally from the subcontinent. He told me that his wife hailed from Gujranwala. (Maharajah Ranjit Singh, one of his wives and mother of Maharajah Duleep Singh, Rani Jindan also hail from this town, as does Suraiya the singer and actress, born 1929). Then I called on the Foreign Minister. The driver of my car, Glenn Salamat is helpful and showed me the sights. One of the Foreign Ministry officials informed me, with a touch of petulance, that the Pakistani Ambassador accredited concurrently, had not presented credentials until then. I assured him that the omission would promptly be made good.

Called on Hamid, a member of the Cabinet. Later, with the owner-driver of my taxi and his wife Fauzia, a sister of an ex-Cabinet Minister, went to a movie and had dinner in a local restaurant. Fauzia informed me that there was a separate channel

for Indo-Pakistani music in their national radio broadcasting service, and gave a thumbnail sketch of local politics.

Left by Suriname Airways at 9:00 am the next day and reached Miami at 14:45 pm. My good banker friend Mushfiq whose last posting had been Montevideo, came with the suitcase that I had left in his care, to the airport Hotel, Marriott. Left at 2300 hours by Pan Am airline. On 17 July, at 12:55 pm, landed back at Buenos Aires.

On 26 July, at 08:30 pm left by Aerolineas Argentinas. After flying for about 4 hours reached Lima at 11:00 pm, local time. I am staying at the Sheraton Hotel. The next day I had lunch with an English speaking law student Sonia Ruiz and her family, comprising her mother Blanca, her sister Dr. Gladys and Francisco and their two-year-old son, at their house near a cinema house at the Jesus Maria barrio (sector) of the city.

On 28 July, Peru's National Day, I went to the Presidential Palace at 11:00 am, and to the Congreso (parliament) at 3:30 pm, to listen to President Belaunde Terry. The function ended at 7:00 pm. Politicians the world over are not known for being economical with words, particularly when they have a captive audience. However, compared with his successor, the eloquent but verbose Alan Garcia, President Belaunde's speech in parliament was brief at a mere three hours. However, even Alan Garcia is a man of few words if compared with the inimitable Fidel Castro. The dollar is equal to 708 Solis, the local currency.

On 4 August, left Lima by air for Bogota, Colombia. I had been to this city before, representing Pakistan at the inauguration of previous Presidents and also on vote gathering missions for Pakistan. On one visit I had lost a wristwatch and on another a fountain pen, attributable to some local nimble fingers. But I made friends with Francisco Parra and his lively family. One year I attended a University function where freedom of speech seemed a reality because students freely caricatured the sitting President of the Nation. Another year there was a fair of the wizards and witches from many parts of the world. I enjoyed visiting the fair and consulting a number of palmists, futurologists and their ilk.

The inauguration ceremony of the President went off without a hitch at the Congreso. Then I attended a reception at the US Embassy for Vice President George Bush, who is here for the Presidential inauguration. After the official engagements, Francisco Parra took me to see a lady tarot card reader and then to dinner at a shopping centre. On an earlier visit I had accompanied some of his family members with a band consisting of young musicians in the middle of the night to serenade his wife Senora Castelblanco. The lady was woken up and came to the balcony to greet the band. It was a surprise birthday present from her children.

Back in Buenos Aires, on 25 August at 4:00 pm called on Ambassador Jimenez of the Foreign Ministry incharge of Asia and Oceania, at Maipu 972. The Foreign Ministry of Argentina is located in three different places. Presented him a note on the two draft agreements to be signed between Pakistan and Argentina that have been dragging on for some time. He on his part gave me the UN draft resolution of Latin American countries on the Malvinas.

Some days later, called on Ambassador Prince Charles Radziwill of the Order of the Knights of Malta. He is slightly roly-poly, with a ruddy face, a full head of silver hair and a luxuriant moustache. The Polish Prince is a former Royal Air Force pilot and is related to a number of the ruling houses of Europe. He is full of interesting anecdotes concerning many past and present politicians and personalities, and is pat on the history of Argentina as well.

On 3 November, Argentina won the United Nations vote on Malvinas/Falklands by a majority of 90 to 12. She always does, at the UN.

On 21 November, with friends drove 56 km south to La Plata, capital of the vast province of Buenos Aires that is bigger than Spain and Italy put together, but with about half a million inhabitants, and had lunch there. The city was founded in 1882. It has many parks and squares and the famous La Plata University. It has a good museum with a rare dinosaur skeleton hanging from the ceiling in one of its halls, the genuine article, not from the sets of Jurassic Park.

On 29 November, visited the new supermarket on the Pan Americana highway, called Carrefour. It is the first of its kind in the country and has proved popular. (Within a decade, this new phenomenon of huge supermarkets would manifest itself in profusion all over Latin America).

On 6 December, transport and shops were closed, due to a general strike called by the powerful labour union, with total success. The main leader of the confederation of labour is the vocal and combative Saul Ubaldini. Another important figure is Lorenzo Miguel, head of the Metal Workers Union. In one of his speeches of exhortation another Peronist Labour Leader Herminio Iglesias, in a pre-election rally declared, with or without me – "conmigo o sinmigo." To me it sounded natural but the last word does not exist in the Spanish language. So the people started calling Herminio Iglesias "Sinmigo."

The driver could not come due to the transport strike, so I drove. My daughter and son, Chandra and Sivasish (Bunting) accompanied me to Finland's national day reception at his Embassy Residence on Quintana 1282, in the suburb of Martinez.

On 22 December, I attended the South Korean Ambassador's lunch at the Plaza Hotel, one of the oldest and most prestigious, at the entrance to the famous Florida Street, opposite the historic Plaza San Martin with the Liberator's equestrian

statue, where important visitors laid floral wreaths in an act of homage. Many foreign leaders and renowned personalities have put up in this hotel over the years. The Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore had also stayed in this hotel until his friend and admirer, the poetess and socialite Victoria Ocampo shifted him to her residence. The Hotel Guest Book has many other famous names, for it was the only hotel of some eminence, until recent years. And even in 1982, the only other good hotels were the Sheraton and the Alvear. The glut in first class hotels in Buenos Aires, this city of cities, in size, style and sophistication second only to New York in the Americas, and population-wise sixth in the world, was still in the future.

The notable achievement of the year 1982 was that Pakistan won the Asian seat of the UN Security Council for two years. I am happy that my humble efforts too helped. We are grateful to each and every country that supported us.

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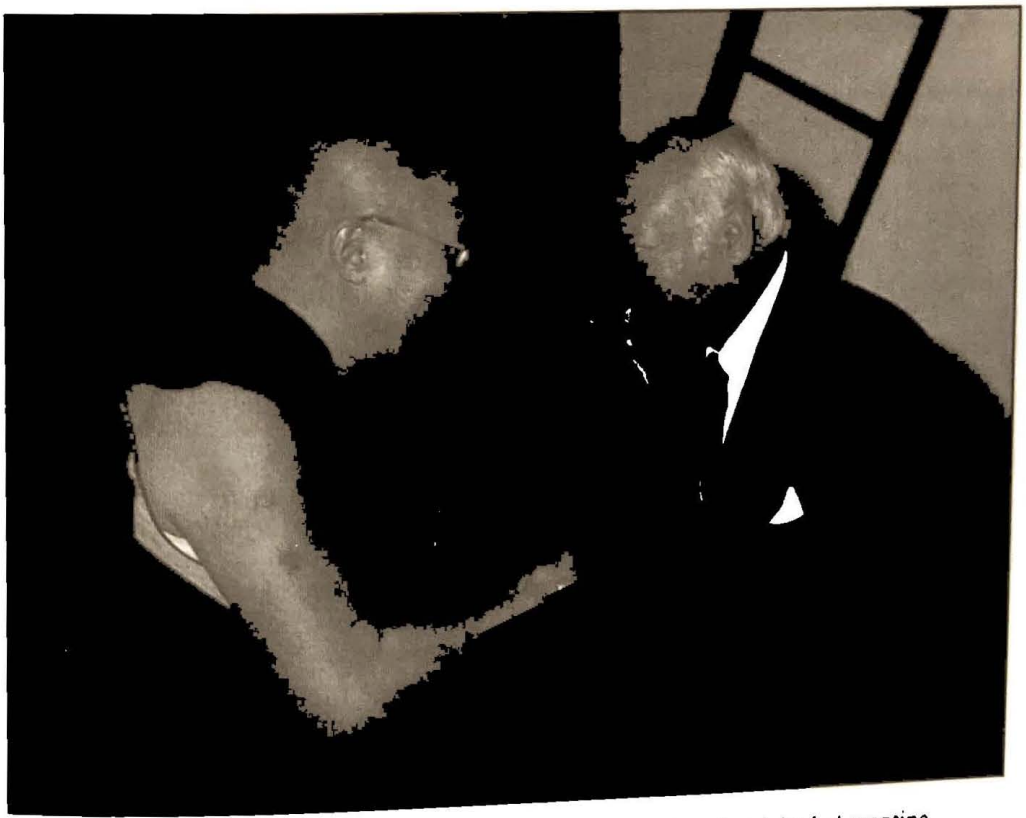

His Holiness The Dalai Lama, with Raja Tridiv Roy, when he visited Argentina

South American Handbook
72nd Edition

Argentina : fact file

Geographic	
Land area	2,780,400 sq. km.
Forested	21.68
Pastures	51.98
Cultivated	9.98
Demographic	
Population (1994)	33,880,000
Annual growth rate (1989-94)	1.38
Urban	86.98
Rural	13.18
Density	12.2 per sq. km.
Religious affiliation	
Roman Catholic	91.68
Birth rate per 1,000 (1994)	19.6
	(World av. 26.0)
Education and Health	
Life expectancy at birth	
Male	68 years
Female	74 years
Infant mortality rate	
Per 1,000 live births (1992)	34.0
Physicians (1988)	1 per 326 persons
Hospital beds	1 per 205 persons
Calorie intake as	
of FAO requirement	131%
Population age 25 and over	
With no formal schooling	5.7%
Literate males (over 15)	95.5%
Literate females (over 15)	95.1%
Economic	
GNP (1993)	US$244,00mn.
GNP per capita	US$7,290
Public external debt (1992)	US$46,835mn.
Tourism recipts (1992)	US$3,09 mn.
Inflation (annual av. 1990.93)	30.38
Radio	1 per 1.6 persons
Television	1 per 4.7 persons
Telephone	1 per 7.0 persons
Employment	
Population economically active (1990)	
	12,305,346
Unemployment rate (1989)	7.96
% of labour force in	
agriculture	12.0
mining	0.5
manufacturing	19.9
construction	10.1
Military forces	69,800

(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

Chile : fact file

Geographic	
Land area	756,626 sq. km.
Forested	11.88
Pastures	18.18
Cultivated	5.88
Demographic	
Population (1994)	13,805,000
Annual growth rate (1989-94)	1.68
Urban	85.38
Rural	14.78
Density	18.2 per sq. km.
Religious affiliation	
Roman Catholic	80.58
Birth rate per 1,000 (1994)	21.3
	(World av. 26.0)
Education and Health	
Life expectancy at birth	
Male	68.5 years
Female	75.6 years
Infant mortality rate	
Per 1,000 live births (1991)	14.6
Physicians (1992)	1 per 889 persons
Hospital bed	1 per 312 persons

Calorie intake as % of FAO requirement	102%
Population age 25 and over With no formal schooling	9.4%
Literate males (over 15)	93.5%
Literate females (over 15)	93.2%
Economic	
GNP (1993)	US$ 37,06 mn.
GNP per capita	US$ 2,730
Public external debt (1992)	US$9,578mn.
Tourism receipts (1992)	US$706mn.
Inflation (annual av. 1986-91)	18.58
Radio	1 per 3.2 persons
Television	1 per 6.8 persons
Telephone	1 per 9.0 persons
Employment	
Population economically active (1991)	4,794,100
Unemployment rate	5.3%
% of labour force in agriculture	17.1
mining	1.9
manufacturing	16.0
construction	6.8
Military forces	91,800

(Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Peru : fact file

Geographic	
Land area	1,285,216 sq. km.
Forested	53.18
Pastures	21.28
Cultivated	2.98
Demographic	
Population (1994)	23,383,000
Annual growth rate (1989-94)	2.18
Urban	71.88
Rural	28.28
Denisty	18.2 per sq. km.
Religious affiliation	
Roman Catholic	92.58
Birth rate per 1,000 (1994)	29.0 (World av. 26.0)
Education and Health	
Life expectancy at birth	
Male	62.7 years
Female	66.6 years
Infant mortality rate Per 1,000 live births (1990-95)	75.8
Physicians (1988)	1 per 997 persons
Hospital beds	1 per 625 persons
Calorie intake as of FAO requirement	87%
Population age 25 and over With no formal schooling	20.1%
Literate males (over 15)	95.9%
Literate females (over 15)	82.6%
Economic	
GNP (1993)	US$33,97,00mn.
GNP per capita	US$1,490
Public external debt (1992)	US$415,417mn.
Tourism recipts (1992)	US$237 mn.
Inflation (annual av. 1990.93)	709.98
Radio	1 per 5.2 persons
Television	1 per 11 persons
Telephone	1 per 28 persons
Employment	
Population economically active (1992)	8,064,000
Unemployment rate (1989)	8.3%
% of labour force in agriculture	33.0
mining	2.4
manufacturing	10.4
construction	3.7
Military forces	115,000

(Source: Encyclopadia Britannica)

Ecuador : fact file

Geographic	
Land area	272,045 sq. km.
Forested	38.38
Pastures	18.78
Cultivated	9.98
Demographic	
Population (1994)	11,221,000
Annual growth rate (1989-94)	2.48
Urban	55.48
Rural	44.68
Denisty	41.2 per sq. km.
Religious affiliation	
Roman Catholic	93.08

Birth rate per 1,000 (1994)	26.3 (World av. 26.0)

Education and Health

Life expectancy at birth	
Male	67.1 years
Female	72.3 years
Infant mortality rate	
Per 1,000 live births (1992)	36.9
Physicians (1992)	1 per 836 persons
Hospital beds	1 per 623 persons
Calorie intake as %	
of FAO requirement	105%
Population age 25 and over	
With no formal schooling	17.0%
Literate males (over 15)	90.5%
Literate females (over 15)	86.2%

Economic

GNP (1993)	US$11,843mn.
GNP per capita	US$1,070
Public external debt (1992)	US$411,84mn.
Tourism recipts (1992)	US$1,070 mn.
Inflation (annual av. 1990.93)	54.18
Radio	1 per 3.7 persons
Television	1 per 12 persons
Telephone	1 per 20 persons

Employment

Population economically active (1990)	3,359,767
Unemployment rate (1989)	1.3%
% of labour force in	
agriculture	30.8
mining	0.6
manufacturing	11.0
construction	5.9
Military forces	58,000

(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

Uruguay : fact file

Geographic

Land area	176,215 sq. km.
Forested	3.8
Pastures	77.38
Cultivated	7.58

Demographic

Population (1994)	3,168,000
Annual growth rate (1989-94)	0.6
Urban	89.38
Rural	10.78
Denisty	18.0 per sq. km.
Religious affiliation	
Christian	66.08
Birth rate per 1,000 (1994)	17.6 (World av. 26.0)

Education and Health

Life expectancy at birth	
Male	69.3 years
Female	75.7 years
Infant mortality rate	
Per 1,000 live births (1992)	18.7
Physicians (1992)	1 per 295 persons
Hospital beds	1 per 215 persons
Calorie intake as %	
of FAO requirement	100%
Population age 25 and over	
With no formal schooling	7.5%
Literate males (over 15)	94.5%
Literate females (over 15)	95.4%

Economic

GNP (1993)	US$10,444mn.
GNP per capita	US$3,340
Public external debt (1992)	US$3,0340mn.
Tourism recipts (1992)	US$3810 mn.
Inflation (annual av. 1986.91)	62.08
Radio	1 per 1.7 persons
Television	1 per 4.5 persons
Telephone	1 per 4.7 persons

Employment

Population economically active (1988)	1,239,4000
Unemployment rate (1989)	2.5%
% of labour force in	
agriculture	14.5
mining	0.1
manufacturing	18.3
construction	5.4
Military forces	24,700

(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

PART IV

BACK TO SQUARE TWO

In April 1991, on my way to Bodhgaya where the Buddha had attained enlightenment more than 2500 years ago and where we are enjoined to perform religious rites especially for our parents when they die, I spent a few days in Kolkata, the city of my mother's family home. Apart from relatives who had come from Rangamati, local Buddhist school children received me. We put up at the Rest House of the Temple run by the Barua Buddhists and were well looked after. During my stay there I also addressed a seminar held to honour the great south Indian constitutionalist and renowned Buddhist leader, the late Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

I met a few elderly relatives from my mother's side. I had last seen some of them when I was in the IInd standard in St. Xavier's College, in 1943 and one or two in the 1950s. One cousin, a year or so my senior at St. Xavier's was now at the Tollygunj Golf Club. He invited me to lunch and showed me around after we had. reminisced over lunch. He is from the well-known family of General Jayanta Choudhry, the "conqueror" of Hyderabad and Goa.

With my wife Rani Arati, Ratna and others I went to see a Bengali play at the Star Theatre. The last performance that Arati and I had attended at the Star was a year or two after we were married in 1953 called "Sultana Razia." On stage we had seen the renowned Ahindra Chowdhury as Bakhtiar Khilji, Ranubala as Sultana Razia. We had seen the matinee idol Uttam Kumar, and Sabita Chatterjee as the dumb girl Shyamali, and like Ahindra another veteran star Jahar Ganguli. We had also attended Sarat Chandra's classic "Srikanta," performed with éclat at the Srirangam Theatre. Except for Ranubala, who perhaps did not grace the screen world, most of the others were famous as cinema actors. We were not disappointed in their histrionic abilities. I have had the good fortune to view the stage performances of Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Rex Harrison, Zero Mostel, Peter O'toole, and Jimmy Stewart, among others. I am of the considered opinion that some of the Calcutta stars were of no less a calibre.

My cousin Nilika came from her flower farm in Ranchi, where she specializes in growing roses. One evening Arati and I invited Nilika (June) and Bunchy Mashi to dinner at a certain restaurant. However, we had gone to the "Star" to see a play and after that we could not get a taxi for two hours as it was the last day of the Bengali Year, the festival of Chaitra Shankranti. When we reached the restaurant our guests had gone. We apologized later but it was a great pity that we could not spend the evening together. After that we met but were not able to have a meal together because of their other engagements.

The Kolkata based Chakma Buddhist monk Ven. Bimal Tissa Bhante, founder of the Sishu Koruna Sangha and other philanthropic organizations, invited us to visit his Bodhicariya school. It had been set up on 15 November 1990 at a location about 30 km out of Kolkata, through the generosity of a French Humanitarian Organization. A few were from Assam, Mizoram and Tripura but most of the students were the sons and grandsons of the Arunachal Pradesh refugees of the early 1960s. They were still stateless and in distress, but they are true Chakma and Jumma. Their spirit is indomitable. They fall. But they rise again, just like their suffering compatriots in the Hill Tracts. I recall with pride the young children at that school, bright, cheerful, confident, alert and enthusiastic. With such qualities no one can wipe out the Chakma and the Jumma. To such a people we can aptly apply the refrain, "They shall overcome."

.....

As it turned out, I was very happy in Argentina, and successive governments of Pakistan were understanding and generous in permitting me the longest tour of duty in one post ever, for any Ambassador of Pakistan, for which I am grateful. The former USSR and Saudi Arabia, among a small number of other countries, have permitted longer tenures in one post, though of course these too were rare cases. On handing over charge in 1995, I was designated Ambassador-at-Large. We spent a year in Buenos Aires. Then, after spending some weeks with Chandra who was working for the ILO in Geneva and her husband Joavnna, Arati, my son Waiki and I along with Troya and her family were back in Islamabad, in Chakma House, by the end of September 1996.

.....

After many years and much bloodshed, a Peace Accord was signed on 2 December 1997 by Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, better known as Shantu and the government of Bangladesh, in the presence of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed. The implementation, on the part of the Bangladesh government has, however, been far from adequate and far too slow. The deprived jumma people, denied their social, economic and political rights, have begun getting restive again.

Adoption of the following measures, which have been repeatedly requested by the Jummas and endorsed by neutral and unprejudiced Human Rights Organizations including Amnesty International, would prevent the simmering unrest in the Hill Tracts from worsening.

(a) Empowerment of the Regional Council;

(b) As agreed in the Peace Accord, Police personnel upto Sub-inspector level to be recruited from amongst the indigenous people and Police to be placed under the Regional Council;

(c) Investigations into human rights abuses followed by trials of those concerned, and the awarding of compensation to the families of the massacred, and the victims of atrocities;

(d) The presence of human rights monitors in the Hill Tracts, and unfettered access provided to national and international journalists;

(e) The setting up of the promised Land Commission as provided for in the Peace Accord of 2 December 1997;

(f) The disbanding of Cluster Villages;

(g) The rehabilitation of "settlers" in areas outside the Hill Tracts; and

(h) Withdrawal of the army. Border Guards can be posted at the international frontiers, as done in other districts, but in reduced numbers and under effective supervision so they do not harass or exploit the local villagers.

Had the Sheikh been alive now, he would perhaps have been somewhat mellower, more experienced, more empathetic, or so I would wish and hope. I am happy that his daughter signed a Peace Accord and brought the guerrilla war in the Hill Tracts to an end and created a separate Ministry for the Hill Tracts under a Minister belonging to the indigenous people, Kalpa Ranjan Chakma. (In the last general elections Begum Khaleda Zia and her BNP won, and Mani Swapan Dewan, MP replaced Kalpa Ranjan Chakma.) She had also passed laws in Parliament in order to create the CHT Regional Council, and appointed J.B. Larma, head of the JSS as its Chairman.

The signing of the Peace Accord on 2 December 1997 was a matter of great satisfaction to me and I had immediately congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as well as J.B. Larma and had expressed the hope that with sincere implementation there would be peace and tranquillity in the Hill Tracts.

Now, almost six years after the signing of the Peace Accord between the Government of Bangladesh and the PCJSS (Shanti Bahini), the Hill Tracts has not been given any autonomy. Even the Regional Council that had been created by name has not been allowed to begin to function. On the other hand Mizoram and Tripura have their respective Chief Ministers and cabinets, elected members and legislative assemblies. As a first step, it would be fair and also wise for the Government of Bangladesh to at least empower the Regional Council and permit it to function with full force.

Now, I express my feelings and give my recommendations to the authorities, with a heart full of hope. As the situation in the Tracts has not improved, and the provisions of the Peace Accord remain unimplemented in the main, an article I wrote on the subject that appeared in daily 'Dawn' of 4 October 2000 is reproduced below to nudge awake the sleeping conscience of relevant powers that be:

Chittagong Hill Tracts: let justice be done
By Raja Tridiv Roy
Pakistan's Ambassador-at-Large

Today, the Chittagong Hill Tracts is a part of Bangladesh, politically. The constitutional position of Bangladesh is that it has a unitary form of government. So, in partial implementation of the Peace Accord and without expressly amending the constitution, the Bangladesh parliament enacted a law setting up the Regional Council of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, over the three District Councils. The Regional Council has not been given sufficient administrative, legislative or financial powers, nor adequate authority and a well-defined jurisdiction. The aspirations and the need for autonomy of the indigenous Jumma hillpeople, therefore, remain unfulfilled.

The Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tangchangya, Pankhua, Mro, Bawm, Murung, Riyang, Khyang, Sak, to name some of the indigenous Jumma, are nevertheless grateful to the extent that it is a form of recognition to their aspirations, and is a measure of autonomy and self-government. Inexplicably though, today, almost three years after the signing of the peace agreement, the Regional Council has not started functioning, though its chairman has been appointed. He is Mr. Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, better known as Shantu, the leader of the Shanti Bahini and the political party, JSS.

The Peace Accord, which was signed on December 2, 1997, was an act of sagacity and political maturity on the part of both, the Bangladesh Government and the Shanti Bahini. In consequence, about two thousand of the Shanti Bahini armed forces laid down their arms at a ceremony in Khagrachari, the headquarters of the northern district of the Hill Tracts. Much publicity was given, with photographs of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed receiving a gun from Mr. Larma. Recently, she has received a prestigious award from an international organization connected with Henry Kissinger, who in the days of yore had called Bangladesh a basket case. As President Nixon's Special Advisor on Security (later, Secretary of State), he had indulged in a bit of sabre-rattling too, and had talked about sending the American Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal during the tail end of the East Pakistan conflict in 1971.

We do not begrudge Sheikh Hasina her recognition. May she win even more laurels. However, an impartial scrutiny of the Peace Accord is urgently called for, to determine how much of it has been flaunted and how much of it respected. The examination would benefit the cause of peace and justice, not only in the Hill Tracts but also in Bangladesh as a whole. The on-going and deliberate evasion of

responsibilities and obligations is sadly nothing but a negation of all canons of justice and fair play.

Some of the pressing needs, only to highlight a few, need to be addressed quickly: redressing civil and criminal wrongs perpetrated by individuals and State authorities, setting up the land commission under a judge of the High Court with the other designated members, withdrawal of the bulk of the army, restitution of lands forcibly seized from the original owners by State sponsored and inducted "settlers", rehabilitation of the internally displaced Jummas, the dismantling of "cluster villages", the constitution of a commission of inquiry to investigate human rights violations, and the trial of the guilty, with due compensation to the affected.

Douglas Sanders, Professor of Law, University of British Columbia, an expert on indigenous peoples and human rights affairs and Wilfred Telkamper, former Vice President of the European Parliament, Co-Chairpersons of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, in their communication to the delegates of the Bangladesh Aid Group meeting, held in Paris, on April 13-14, 2000, said, " The agreement between the JSS and the government of Bangladesh, signed in December 1997, has not brought peace and stability in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), as was hoped for. The government is delaying implementation of the accord, while projecting itself internationally as the great peacemaker. Since the signing of the accord at least 40 Jummas have been killed and more than 100 Jumma activists have been arrested, in particular so-called 'anti-accord' activists, who continue to campaign for 'full autonomy' as the most important demands of the Jumma people were not fulfilled in the accord (on constitutional recognition as indigenous people; regional autonomy: out-migration of Bengali settlers, forcibly brought in under earlier government-sponsored transmigration programme and full restoration of indigenous land rights over land occupied by outsiders; full de-militarisation of the CHT).

The situation in the CHT is far from peaceful. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission is gravely concerned about the continuing disturbances in the CHT and fears that the peace process itself is in serious danger.

The continuing violations of human rights, and atrocities perpetrated upon the unfortunate Jumma people, even some of the most blatant occurrences, have neither been inquired into, nor if so done, have the reports been published. Amnesty International and other humanitarian agencies have brought out reports citing specific instances.

One of these is of the arrest and subsequent disappearance of Miss Kalpana Chakma, a student leader. The second is of a recent case, in 1999, involving the murder of a number of Jumma people who had saved a local girl from the attack of a soldier in Babuchara Bazar in upper Maini Valley, and the desecration of the Beluban temple nearby by soldiers and settlers.

Naturally, if violators of the law and of human rights and dignity are not brought to trial, it sends a clear signal to all concerned that one can commit any amount of violence with impunity, provided the victim is a member of the minority community, ethnic or religious.

An international criminal court of justice has been established at last. More than 110 countries, including Russia, have already signed the treaty for establishing the Court to try all cases of war crimes, human rights violations and genocide. The Hague trial of the violators of human rights in Bosnia is a precedent. East Timor is an example of the world community's resolve not to condone tyranny, ethnocide and human rights violations.

The writing on the wall is clear. States must act promptly on human rights violations, and take stringent measures to protect the rights and dignity of its citizens, particularly of the more vulnerable sections such as the ethnic and religious minorities.

Instead of trying to protect the criminals and hide the crimes, the Government of Bangladesh would do well to publish the reports on the Kaukhali massacre, the Bhusanchara massacre, the Boalkhali massacre, the Logang massacre, the Nanyachar massacre, to begin with. They all occurred in the Hill Tracts. And the victims were unarmed indigenous peoples.

The obvious consequence would be to bring those concerned to open and transparent trial by a tribunal consisting of high court judges, who would also be required to determine the damages and compensation to be awarded to the next of kin of those slaughtered, and directly to individual survivors of the atrocities.

Ancillary to the foregoing would be the establishment of an impartial inquiry commission to investigate all incidents of human rights violations carried out in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in the name of suppressing guerrillas or under any other pretext. Human rights violations cannot be condoned, irrespective of the causes or conditions. The perpetrators should be brought to justice, whoever they may be, and wherever they may be, in Chile, in Argentina, or in Bangladesh.

Amnesty International, in its February 2000 report, makes some incisive comments. Their invaluable recommendations should be accepted and implemented forthwith, for the good of all. One of the most acutely felt needs is the presence of representatives of national and international Human Rights Organizations in the Hill Tracts. Another is the emphatic desirability of providing free access to national and international journalists to the Hill Tracts. The Bangkok Declaration also has made some important recommendations. They should be accepted.

I appeal to the Government of Bangladesh, to the human rights organizations, and to all justice loving forces in Bangladesh, and elsewhere, to provide active support to the people of the Hill Tracts who are being shamelessly and ruthlessly

oppressed and persecuted by those with an insatiable greed for lust, pelf and power, who would vitiate the peace accord so that they could ravish and rampage at will. The maimed, the distressed and the dispossessed, and all the innocent victims of violence, have long been crying out for justice, unheard in the vastness of engulfing silence.

Let justice be done. Not only the international community, but all the men and women of Bangladesh, students, housewives, workers, peasants, merchants, intellectuals, particularly the journalists, lawyers, teachers and professors, and the politicians, and all who value human rights and human dignity, should no longer remain silent but actively speak up and demand that justice be done to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and to its past and present victims. Once justice is done, the good action in itself will bring its rewards, and with it, peace and prosperity to Bangladesh.

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Bangladesh could do well by taking cognizance of the political settlements arrived at separately by the then Government of India with Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura, each of which was elevated to full statehood within the Indian Union. Separate peace with the Nagas and Mizos are models where autonomy was granted without impairing sovereignty. In Bangladesh, emulating such examples would pay dividends, rather than in trying to pacify blinkered and incorrigible extremists. Since Sheikh Hasina has been succeeded by Khaleda Zia, a virulent opponent of the Peace Accord when she was in the opposition, we have to wait and see what she does in the Hill Tracts.

In order to secure peace and harmony the Peace Accord should be sincerely and fully implemented. One of the points of agreement was the setting up of the Regional Council; another the Land Commission and the third that the Hill Tracts would have police personnel up to and including Sub-Inspector level manned by the indigenous Jumma hillpeople. Upto now, not one of the three has been implemented and the Regional Council has not been empowered adequately. Can one consider such evasion and inaction as confidence building?

It is well to remember that successive governments have ruled the CHT after the annexation by the British in 1860. During this period, the people have not even once been able to exercise their right to self- determination. At the time of partition when British paramountcy lapsed, the people should have been given a chance to express this inalienable right, but they were not. This is guaranteed under international instruments including the two international covenants – on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Common Article 3 of the two covenants elaborates:

"All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

With all the games that mice and men play, it is strange but true that still the earth spins and whirls through space on the same old track. Let them strut their hour upon the stage. As for the plight of the indigenous peoples of the Hilltacts we watch and wait for the opportunity to be provided them to freely exercise their right to self-determination. I want peace and harmony and prosperity for all the peoples of the Hill Tracts so that all may live in amity and goodwill.

Over the years, the succession of events has amply and clearly proved that denial of the rights of peoples and attempts to suppress their just demands through oppression only brings sorrow and misery and never peace and harmony. It is incumbent upon the authorities to show their sense of responsibility and provide meaningful autonomy to the people of the Hill Tracts, as in the case of Nagaland and Mizoram. The Jumma hillpeople would then be grateful and reward Bangladesh with loyalty, and with peace, and with tranquillity and harmony among the various peoples. As a consequence the economy would likely improve and enrich the people of Bangladesh as a whole.

On the other hand, if it is thought that by sheer might and through terror tactics they will be brought under submission and subjugation as slaves, then the conflict in the Hill Tracts is not likely to be resolved. There is no saying where, how, and when there will be discord, despair, defiance and destruction again. Let us hope that the powers that be will eschew a policy of intimidation, coercion and violence, and instead opt for one of reason and fair play. Surely they realize from their own bitter experience, that there is only one path to peace and prosperity. And that is through wisdom and justice, and these twin forces must prevail, not greed and cruelty. The Jumma people of the Hill Tracts have confidence a leadership will emerge that will bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a lasting peace with dignity for the Hill Tracts and for the whole of Bangladesh.

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My wife had joined Chandra and Joavnna at their new house in Oslo with Devasish's two children when their summer holidays began in Dhaka in 2001. Some weeks later I joined them, spending a few days in London when I met again my Didi and my second son Sivasish who was working in the Sheraton Hotel near our Embassy on Lowndes Square. I also met my niece Ujjaini, her husband Ashu and their little baby daughter Nicola.

As the plane was nearing Oslo, looking outside I was pleasantly surprised to see wooded hills everywhere. The greenery promised serenity. Norway has recently acquired a new status as a peacemaker and an upholder of human rights and social justice. She along with Sweden is one of the highest donors to developing countries. Her role as peacemaker, mediator and facilitator has brought her fresh laurels and Norway is looked upon with increasing respect and affection particularly by the under privileged all over the world.

One of my memories of Hamlet, the play, was brought into focus in 1978 when I visited the palace at Elsinore. It was in these battlements that the ghost of the late King Hamlet had appeared to his son, the Prince of Denmark. Hamlet, buffeted by doubts and ever vacillating, says to his friend Horatio, "Give me a man that is not passion's slave, and I will wear him in my heart, as I do thee Horatio." Amongst his other stresses, and tribulations, was the lurking possibility of the invasion of Denmark by Prince Fortinbras of Norway. In the closing scenes Laertes, with a poisoned sword wounds Hamlet (in the earlier version played by Sir Laurence Olivier) and he is about to die. The Prince makes a fine and forgiving speech and ends with the words, "The rest is silence." Thereafter, Fortinbras, the invading Prince of Norway appears and hears the tale of trauma and tragedy from Horatio and orders a full ceremonial and dignified burial for Prince Hamlet.

While in Oslo we visited the Kontiki museum, cruised in the tourist boats, went to see movies and visited the special tourist spots. We were impressed at the real democracy and social justice that prevailed and the affection of the people for the royal family when the crown prince was engaged to be married to a commoner with a child. What was most remarkable to us was the presence of sunlight well past midnight. On my next trip I hope I will be able to go to Kautokeino in the midst of Saami land to witness the sun in midsummer, or its absence in midwinter. The Saami have their own parliament and the members range from Norway, Sweden, Finland to Russia. I hope the indigenous Saami people will continue to make further progress and at the same time preserve their entity and integrity while promoting peace between themselves as well as between them and non-Saamis. My daughter and son-in-law spoilt us. I returned, having put on a few extra kilos but I had a great time and met some of Joavnna's lovely relatives, and enjoyed some walks with my grandchildren in the peace of the greenery of the suburban countryside.

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At the end of September 2002, the Secretary of the Ministry of Minorities, Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs, Tariq Janjua telephoned me to say that the Minister Col. S.K. Tressler would very much like me to accompany him in the delegation to Japan for the opening of the Gandhara artefacts exhibition in Tokyo from 28 October to 2 November 2002. The Minister could not go, and as it turned out the Secretary was to go but he too could not at the last minute because of his father's death. However, the charming Senior Joint Secretary Ismail Hassan Niazi took their place and he and I flew to Tokyo on 27 October 2002.

The lady Foreign Minister of Japan and our Ambassador Touqir Hussain and his wife attended the inauguration of the Gandhara exhibition, which would later be shown at other cities of Japan. The recently returned Japanese Ambassador Sadaaki Numata and his wife Kyoko Numata also attended. I admired the simplicity of the ceremony and the adorable discipline of the invitees and the appreciation they showed as they viewed the exquisite pieces of Buddha sculptures taken from different parts of Pakistan. The same evening there was a dinner by the Japanese

hosts in the New Otani Hotel where we were put up. There was an interesting exchange of views on Pakistan's arts and crafts and its historic sites, which the Japanese were keen to visit in greater numbers.

Ismail Sahib and I were well looked after and were taken to visit Tokyo city and to a park where we participated in a tea ceremony. On another day we went to the ancient capital of Kyoto, the renowned centre of ancient Japanese culture. We enjoyed the ride in the Bullet Train and admired Japanese hospitality, courtesy, discipline and punctuality, and the Kyoto Guide's exquisite wit. I had last visited Tokyo and Kyoto about 30 years ago. In Tokyo I observed continuity and progress, more high rises and some dyed hair amongst the youngsters. But essentially Japan was the embodiment of progress with grace and innovation based on the bedrock of solid conservatism and nationalism. They have achieved a great deal and may they continue to progress and lead the world to peace and prosperity.

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Pakistan-Bangladesh relations have been improving over the years in fits and starts, with sporadic emotional outbursts and retrograde moves by one or the other or both. Now, with Khaleda Zia back in power after the October 2001 elections, the relationship should improve. President Pervez Musharraf visited Bangladesh on 29-31 July 2002 and expressed regret for the 1971 excesses while he laid a wreath at the martyr's memorial outside Dhaka in Savar. Pakistan and Bangladesh also signed a number of protocols and bilateral trade concessions.

Having completed one year of ceasefire in Sri Lanka the conflict with the Tamil Tigers is hopeful of a solution. The new Prime Minister's initiatives and the more cooperative attitude of the Tigers, under the auspices of Norway is encouraging. In Burma the standoff between the military government and the Karens and Shans, and the democratic forces led by the frail looking but formidable Daw Aung San Suu Kyi seems to be attenuating somewhat through dialogue but substantive achievement is still a far cry.

The violent conflict between the government of Nepal and the revolutionaries under "Prachanda" has abated to the extent that there is a ceasefire and negotiations have begun between the two.

Pakistan-India relations, vitiated by the festering Kashmir dispute, is like Dr. Dolittle's Push-me-pull-you. They both ostensibly, and needlessly, demonstrated their nuclear capability in 1998. Although the majority in both the countries is sceptical, the minority hopes that in the aftermath of the US-Taliban confrontation, the Kashmir issue might be addressed seriously, and an acceptable solution might evolve in the not too distant future.

There was an attack on the Parliament building in Delhi on 13 December 2001, which India says was sponsored by terrorists based in Pakistan. Pakistan

strongly denies this and asks for evidence. After a million soldiers from India and Pakistan remained at a face off for months on end, in late 2002 India announced withdrawal of troops from the Line of Control and the International border. Pakistan announced that it would reciprocate with enthusiasm. Also in 2002 India had withdrawn her High Commissioner, earlier having suspended train and bus services to Pakistan, and reduced their Mission staff. Then in early February 2003 India expelled Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner and four others. Pakistan promptly reciprocated. In May 2003 both countries have agreed to the reinstatement of High Commissioners and the resumption of rail road and airlinks, and parliamentary and other people to people visits. Though expectations by the people at large are minimal, "hope springs eternal in the human breast." My friend Afzal Agha said the other day when he visited Islamabad, "Press on, regardless." We must never give up. The quest for peace and harmony must go on.

China's relations with India seem to be on the mend, and with Pakistan they are excellent. If the zealots of the region can be induced not to interfere in the other's internal affairs, the two nations would likely get even closer. China's relations with Taiwan and the US will probably be a little bumpy for the next decade but possibly not enough to warrant an all out war. In the field of trade and influence peddling now that China is a member of the WTO, the competition will likely get more intense. The worse case secenario would be a war between Beijing and (US backed) Taipeh. The worst case would be cataclysmic, so hopefully averted. Motivated by a desire to enervate the growing giant of the east, wars of attrition on its borders could also be choreographed, and economic and social pressures on China would likely increase. With their traditional patience the Chinese would most likely surmount these irritations and through the years progress to the destined superpower status. There can and should be co-existence between various economic and military giants, not without some disputes and conflicts of course, but hopefully containable ones.

Despite Security Council disapproval the US-British-Australian invasion of Iraq is a *fait accompli* having caused a great deal of death and destruction.

The continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict shows a few signs of improvement, but only the future will tell if peace in the middle east is achieved.

The march of democracy shows that in 1950 there were only 22 democracies covering 30% of world population. In 2000, 120 electoral democracies out of 192 countries covered 60% of the world's population. In an English daily on 28-07-2002 under the title "Points to Ponder" Doctor Farrukh Saleem says, in Pakistan's budget of 2002-2003: "Total Tax Revenue: Rs. 460 billion, Debt Servicing: Rs. 290 billion, Defence: Rs. 146 billion. Tax Revenue less Debt Servicing less Defence equals Rs. 24 billion only."

The overall picture with increasing poverty, disease and armed conflict in most of Africa, Asia and Latin America is pretty grim, even when not made worse by the crueller aspects of nature's manifestations, or selfish interplay of power politics.

Still miracles do happen and we can but hope that lots of them will come to the aid and assistance of mankind in general and the suffering downtrodden in particular.

5 February 2000 to 23 January 2001 was the reign of the Dragon, and there was more bad news in the following Year of the Snake, from 24 January 2001 to 11 February 2002, that included the 11 September tragedies and the retributive aftermath. The Year of the Horse started from 12 February 2002 and lasted until 31 January 2003 with its spate of conflicts and tragedies. On two occasions Pakistan and India were on the brink of another war. The Year of the Goat commenced on 1 February 2003 and will last till 21 January 2004. According to the forecast, "After the tribulations of the last two years, the Goat year will offer hope, reconciliation and healing... major attempts will be made to settle disputes and bring peace to troubled areas. This has been seen in previous Goat years, for example with the historic Camp David peace treaty, the SALT II agreement, the ending of the Gulf War and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. This pattern of resolution will certainly be a major feature of 2003, with the accent very much on diplomacy and dialogue." The failure of diplomacy and dialogue culminated in the US-UK invasion of Iraq. Let us hope no other wars will take place, and diplomacy and dialogue will prevail.

President Pervez Musharraf visited Moscow in February 2003 and signed some MOUs indicating a new relationship of friendship and cooperation from both sides. This was followed up with Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali's visit to China where he was received warmly by the new leadership and the traditional friendship between the two nations was reaffirmed and strengthened.

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Tony Grech, Didi's husband was from the island of Malta who went to school in England and joined the firm of Louis Dreyfus. After a stint in Dhaka he and Didi moved to England and settled in a house purchased in Farnham, Surrey. Tony would commute to the Dreyfus office in London every day. They have two daughters, Joyoti and Gitali. Didi wrote poetry from an early age and was a published poet in the English language.

My younger sister Moitri, like me was interested in sports and games and had won the Divisional Athletic Championships three times at Dowhill School. She only missed her last year's championship at school due to knee trouble. Later she represented East Pakistan in the athletic team that went to West Pakistan in the 1960s. She went on to doing her master's in English and for a while taught English at the Holy Cross College in Dhaka. My younger brother Samit (Johnny) taught History at the Rangamati College and retired in 2002. My youngest sister Rakhi also studied at Princeton and obtained three masters' degrees in the US. Academically they were the three highest achievers amongst our brothers and sisters. My youngest brother Nandit (Renny) although not an academic, served in the World Food Programme in Dhaka for many years until taking early retirement in 2001, and was also a sportsman.

Raja Devasish Roy was born on the early hours of 10 April 1959, installed on 25 November 1977. He graduated from Rangamati College, University of Chittagong in 1981. Devasish then did his B.A. (Hons) Law from the University of Kent at Canterbury, Kent (UK) in 1985. He was then called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, London. In 1991 he acquired a Diploma in Legal Studies at the La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia. Apart from carrying out his responsibilities as the Chief of Chakma and attending various international conferences abroad he has also been practicing in Dhaka District Court since 1988 and in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (High Court Division) since 1991. He has published a number of articles on indigenous peoples and human rights.

He married Tatu, daughter of a Chakma Deputy Superintendent of Police Tripurakanta Chakma of the Rangi Goza on 27 February 1989. Rani Tatu completed her B.A. (Hons) and then did her M.A. in English Literature from the Dhaka University. She accompanied Raja Devasish on numerous tours to the rural areas as well as to Argentina and Australia. She died of liver related complications on 16 November 1998. They have two children, Rajkumar Tribhuvan Aryadev Ernesto Roy, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 11 February 1990 and Rajkumari Aradhana Ayetri Roy, born in Dhaka on 16 October 1994.

Rajkumari Chandra Kalindi Desiree studied Law in England at the Manchester Polytechnic, then obtained her law degree from the Punjab University in 1981. Subsequently she studied Aeronautical Law in Buenos Aires and then acquired an L.L.M (Masters in International Law) at the American University in Washington D.C. in 1989. Chandra was involved in the founding of UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization) at The Hague and subsequently worked for the ILO (International Labour Organization) in Geneva in the legal department. She has published extensively on indigenous peoples and human rights and works as a consultant. On 22 April 1994 Chandra married Saami lawyer John B. Henriksen (Joavnna) who is also a Norwegian diplomat. They have a daughter Priya Sara born on 16 February 2002.

My second son Kumar Sivasish married Gabriela Tortorella in 1988 and was blessed with a daughter, Carol Shapna born on 9 November 1993. He took a translator's degree from the Business School of Buenos Aires and for some time worked at the only English language daily "Buenos Aires Herald" (established 1876). He obtained a Post-Graduate diploma in Hotel Operations from Switzerland in December 2000 and is at present working in a hotel in London.

Kumar Indrasish has been with me all along since he joined me in Pakistan in 1976, and is now taking a computer course in Islamabad.

Rajkumari Troya Triveni graduated from the Chittagong University, later married a cousin Pavel Khisa. They have two sons, Shukdev Solis born in Buenos Aires on 20 August 1989 and Satyajit born at Islamabad on 4 August 1997.

My daughter by my second marriage, Rajkumari Piya, also a graduate of the Chittagong University, married Dr. Sumedh Dewan and they have two sons and a daughter.

Padma Gwenhael, my son by my third wife, lives in France.

I have had the pleasure of a number of family members including Didi and her second son Michael visiting me in Islamabad in the beginning of the year 2003. She lost her husband almost two years ago and has moved to a flat in Farnham after disposing of her and Tony Grech's house on Broomleaf Road. This was her and Michael's first visit to Islamabad, and they were very happy here, as were the rest of the visitors, and of course the host in particular. And after many years Didi also visited Rangamati from here. Another first visit was from Joavnna, Chandra's husband from Oslo along with their little daughter Priya Sara who returned with her mother to Oslo after three months in order to celebrate her first birthday with her father on 16 February 2003. We also had the pleasure of a visit from Arati's first cousin once removed, Mani Swapan Dewan. This cousin-in-law had at one time been a member of the Shanti Bahini. At present he is the Khaleda Zia government's minister in-charge of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs. Mani Swapan Dewan is the elected Member of Parliament from Rangamati Hill District (one of the three Districts of the Hill Tracts). Troya and Pavel with their sons Solis Shukdev and Satyajit, left in early February after spending some weeks with us. Shanchayan Dewan, my nephew who resides with us in Islamabad now, left on a visit to Rangamati in January 2003. He has married and returned to Islamabad with his bride Sujala, first cousin of his brother's wife, on 30 March 2003.

My wife, Rani Arati arrived here first with our grandchildren Tribhuvan and Ayetri, who have since returned to Dhaka with their father, who had come on a short visit. Arati and I quietly commemorated our 50th wedding and installation anniversary on 2 March 2003, with Ali Jan, Halim Sharif, Shahida and Indrasish at the "Golden Dragon" Chinese Restaurant. We had not invited any of our friends but these had remembered the date and had dropped in with cakes and flowers.

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On 16 February my son Raja Devasish held a three-day Punyah Festival in Rangamati to commemorate 25 years of his installation and to formally acclaim and install his heir apparent Rajkumar Tribhuvan Aryadev, now 13 years of age, as Yuvaraj (Crown Prince). I sent the following message on the occasion, which was announced at the Punyah Durbar:

"On the auspicious occasion of the Punyah, 16-18 February 2003, to mark the silver jubilee of my son, Raja Devasish Roy's accession to the Chakma Raj 25 years ago, and the designation of his son, my grandson, Rajkumar Aryadev Tribhuvan Roy as the Yuvaraj (his heir and successor to the Chakma Raj) I send my blessings.

May the Tathagata Buddha bless my son and my grandson on this historic occasion and grant them both a long and successful life.

I wish them courage, fortitude and good fortune in fulfilling their role and responsibilities as the descendants of a long line of Chakma Rajas, and am confident that they will do their utmost to live up to the expectations of our people and to guide them to a bright and prosperous future where all the Hill Tracts people would live together in peace and harmony."

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On 2 April 2003 I called on the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali. The Pakistan Television broadcast an interview with me. The daily newspapers including the News and the Pakistan Observer commented on it. **The News** of 3 April writes:

Raja Tridiv calls on prime minister.

"Islamabad: Raja Tridiv Roy called on Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali here on Wednesday and exchanged views with him on the matters of national importance.

The prime minister has conferred on Raja Tridiv Roy the status of federal minister in view of his meritorious services for the country and nation. A gazette notification has also been issued by the Cabinet Division in this regard.--- APP."

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Raja Tridiv Roy: With his close friends Ali Jan Shawl (left) and Barrister Halim Sharif (right)

APPENDICES

(In chronological order)

Appendix-I

A RAJA REMEMBERS AN ERA GONE WITH THE WIND

By Anjum Niaz

"Yet there is a certain quality of sadness and an aura of sighs. One does not hear laughter; smiles are a rarity. Perhaps it is merely my imagination. Perhaps it is mere nostalgia for the early 70's, for an era that has vanished. We had much less then, almost of everything, materially speaking. Yet we were more happy. There was then a certain vigour and verve in islamabad, and a radiance. Perhaps it was the promise, the promise of dawn breaking through the misty darkness with a whisper and a smile beckoning a new tomorrow."

This in a nutshell is how Raja Tridiv Roy feels about life today in Islamabad. After a glorious innings as federal minister for full ten years immediately after the break-up of East Pakistan followed by fifteen years as our ambassador in Argentina the Raja of the Chittagong Hill Tracts is back in Islamabad. Sadly he has been "discarded like an old shoe". The *Babus* in the Foreign Office have no time or patience for him. Despite being appointed Ambassador-at-Large by the Pakistan government, the 65 year old Raja of the chakma tribe is history now. Even, the monthly stipend fixed for him is not paid promptly by the foreign Office. Months go by and the *Babus* don't lift a finger. Considering that the stipend is now Raja Tridiv's main source of income he has to humiliate himself by sending constant reminders to them.

The Additional foreign Secretary in charge of Administration Syed Rafat Mehdi has dug up old medical bills pertaining to Raja's grand daughter's treatment in Argentina several years ago. "Now I am being told that the Foreign Ministry will adjust them against my baggage allowance for which I have not yet been reimbursed," says the Raja, who wonders why he alone is being "discriminated against" by the high-ups in the Ministry. "Why after such a long time am I being told that I owe the GOP (Government of Pakistan) money for my grand-daughter's treatment.

Despite being given the short shrift, despite being scrapped by the FO (Foreign Office), the Raja holds his head high, has no feelings festering towards his detractors. Being blue-blooded the Raja exudes dignity and grace. He bears his "ordeal" with Buddhist philosophy of forbearance and patience.

New "darlings" like Mian Nawaz Sharif's legal counsel, Akram Shaikh now occupy the FO (Foreign Office's) living hours. Mr Shaikh is the latest Ambassador-at-Large. And the darbaris in the FO are going all out to please the new appointee, While Raja Tridiv can't even get through to the additional secretary on the phone. Similarly, foreign Minister Gohar Ayub has no time for a has-been like Roy either. Gohar's memory must be short. But as a former army major, Gohar must jog his brains. After all, it was his father, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, who appointed autocratic Bengalis like Fazul Qadir Chaudhary (Speaker of national Assembly) and Monem Khan (Governor East Pakistan), who fuelled the flames of discontent and hatred among Bengalis for West Pakistanis. The only man to neutralize the hatred and work towards amity between the two wings was Raja Tridiv Roy. And when the time to take sides came without a second thought, he left all he had and arrived in Islamabad with just "one suit case". After the fall of Dhaka, Bhutto in his first address to the nation "asked me to come over to hold discussions. So I arrived on December 20."

Why after acknowledging Tridiv's sacrifices for a quarter of a century by making him feel at home, has the government of Pakistan now turned tepid towards him? A couple of *Babus* are undoing all the goodwill the Raja has for Pakistan. Indeed, it's a sad reflection on our official values: to worship only the rising sun. Raja Tridiv Roy is the setting sun. "I was the only independent member of the East Pakistan assembly when Mujeeb-ur-Rehman's Awami League swept the polls in 1971. Many messages were sent to me by him to defect. I was given tempting offers and when I resisted I was threatened that my family back home in the Hill Tracts would suffer. I didn't relent."

He proudly declares: "I am a Pakistani and will always be a Pakistani." When Bangladesh was born, the Raja left his home and hearth to show allegiance with Pakistan. "I was never a Bangladeshi," he insists. "Mujibur Rehman (Shaikh Haseena's father) told me to become a Bangladeshi. How could I? The Chakma tribe are not Bengalis. We have different race, religion, culture, language and identity." His wife and children still live in the Hill Tracts. Raja Tridiv Roy is still the chief of the Chakmas, only in his absence, his son is standing in for him. "I have never gone back since the day I left in November 1971." Naturally, he misses his home and family and the princely environs he was born to. "But, I have never looked back. I have no complaints against the GOP. It has been very gracious to me. Even after I retired in 1995, I was appointed Ambassador-at-Large by the then prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

It was BB's father, who as President of Pakistan asked Tridiv Roy to join his cabinet in December 1971. "Mr Bhutto with his whole cabinet came to receive me at the airport after my address to the UN in December 1972 at the Chaklala Airport. While in New York, his mother was flown by the Bangladesh government to try and persuade him to return. "I even had to refuse my own mother." After Zulfikar Ali Bhutto assumed prime minister ship, he offered Tridiv Roy the presidency. "One day in Murree, Mr Bhutto asked me to become the president. I thanked him profusely, but

declined his kind offer for two reasons. One, that I couldn't fancy myself as the president because I am a free spirit who hates to be constricted. Second, I am a Buddhist. The constitution of Pakistan stipulates that only a Muslim can become the president."

When ZAB's government fell and Gen Ziaul Haq assumed power, Raja Tridiv Roy continued as his cabinet member. "He was a very unassuming man," the Raja remebers. "In 1981, he appointed me Ambassador to Argentina (concurrently to Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Uruguay) until my retirement in May 1995."

You were quite a playboy?

The Raja just laughs. "I loved throwing big parties at my house on Embassy Road. In fact, I was a trendsetter of sorts. It was the first spring after the break-away of East Pakistan. Every body was down in the dumps. So, I decided to have a fun party in which I invited Mehdi Hassan to sing. We let our hair down. Fellow cabinet ministers like Khan Abdul Qayum Khan, Hafeez Peerzada and J. A. Rahim came. Of course Mr. Bhutto came to know about it from the agencies. I don't know what exactly they reported, but Mr. Bhutto told me every gently "Raja Sahib, do have your parties, but try to make them smaller."

Once the Raja along with a couple of friends went to Murree. Again ZAB was told about the "orgy" on the hills by his intelligence goons. ZAB snubbed them by writing on the file: "He's (Tridiv Roy) a lonely man, leave him alone!"

Well, the thrice married Raja with seven kids can hardly be described as a "lonely man". His first two wives were from his native land. His third was a French woman, whose husband was 12 years younger than the Raja. He was posted in Islamabad but was having an affair with someone else. "I didn't break their marriage. It was already on the rocks," says the Raja who is reported to have had a roaring love affair in Islamabad. He has since separated from her. Now he has only wife number one to look forward to as he divorced wife No. 2. "Let's say I was marriage prone. But today, I am happy with my status of a married man with my wife far away!"

However, the Raja's "biggest worry" today is the guerrilla warfare being conducted between the Shanti Bhaini, the armed wing of the JSS and the Bangladesh government in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

"My people have been denied constitutional rights for which they are fighting. Bangladesh must withdraw its army and the settlers from the Hill Tracts. Fifty thousand of my tribe have already fled to India because of the atrocities being committed on them. The Kaptai Dam and the Karanaphuli Paper Mills have dislocated many. If the Mizo and the Nagas in India can get autonomy, why can't the Chakmas? I am willing to mediate if asked. My people want me, but I wonder if Shaikh Haseena wants me to play this role. She didn't see me when she came to Islamabad, saying she was too busy."

Anicca and Karma are two teachings of Buddha, which Tridiv tries to follow religiously. "I feel one should live in the present, accept life as it is with its trials and tribulations, its ups and downs. Annica means perpetual flux, nothing is constant starting from the smallest sub-atom to the universe, so we must accept the good and the bad. Karma teaches us that if I commit good, then the result will be good. I must therefore try to order my life in a manner that I exude positive forces and avoid creating negative actions. I may succeed at times, but I should be aware and try to strive for the positive –positive means a life of love, tolerance and compassion."

Which world is Raja Tridiv living in?

(Daily Dawn, Sunday, 10 August1997)

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Appendix-II

KASHMIR & OTHER FLASHPOINTS

By Raja Tridiv Roy

The U.S. position on Kashmir has been reiterated after our Prime Minister's meeting with President Clinton recently. They are concerned but America could offer its good offices as a mediator only if both India and Pakistan ask for it. India has repeatedly said that it considers the Kashmir dispute a bilateral matter and does not accept any third party mediation. However, the numerous bilateral meetings have produced no difference in the stated positions of both India and Pakistan. The British too have offered to mediate from time to time but India has steadfastly rejected all such offers.

While the conflict in Kashmir festers, thousands continue to die, thousands more to suffer. Will there ever be peace and harmony in Kashmir? How and when?

Recently Lord Avebury visited parts of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. Was he able to meet people of the regions without official presence? If so, it would be worthwhile for him to let the world at large know about his findings and his views.

People from India, Pakistan and elsewhere, and above all people from the various regions of the 50,000 square mile state of Jammu and Kashmir should be permitted to express their views. Even if the U.N. resolutions calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir have not yet been implemented, and the Kashmiris have not been able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, and until such time as they can exercise their right, it might help,

(a) To let neutral, international fact finding missions visit the various regions under Indian and Pakistani control regularly. And let them publish their findings;

(b) Also let groups of Indians and Pakistanis jointly visit and disseminate their findings;

(c) And let regional representatives be made full members in the negotiating process between India and Pakistan.

These reports would at least keep the world informed about the actual state of affairs. And the citizens of India, Pakistan and Kashmir too, would benefit from knowing of the situation obtaining in the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist regions, in the whole of the disputed state.

I read my friend Mr. Bhandara's article of 1st December in *Dawn* with great interest and would like to comment only on the solution proposed by him. He

suggests, by mutual and international consent, to award Jammu and Ladakh to India, and Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan to Pakistan.

It sounds somewhat like the notorious Boundary Commission awards of Sir Cyril Radcliffe. The statements and biographies of some of the persons actually involved, and documents like the minutes of the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten's meetings, have amply demonstrated that some of the decisions were motivated by partisan politics and not by a sense of justice and fair play; and not based upon the avowed criteria. One case in point is the award of Muslim majority Gurdaspur to India, thereby providing New Delhi the only land link to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. And as a counterpoise on 18 August, five days after the Bengal Boundary Award had already been announced, Radcliffe awarded the Chittagong Hill Tracts with 97 per cent non-Muslim population, to Pakistan. Can one wrong be righted by committing another wrong? Since when did two wrongs make a right? In the North West Frontier Province and in the Sylhet district of Assam referenda were held to ascertain the wishes of the people, as to which Dominion they wished to join. Why did they exclude the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts from exercising their option?

I have no facile solution to offer in the intractable Kashmir imbroglio. War, nuclear or conventional, is obviously out. Patience and perseverance will win the day. We must have a peaceful negotiated settlement. In these negotiations, however, representatives from Buddhist Ladakh, Hindu Jammu and from the valley of Kashmir as well as from Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan, should be included. After all, whose fate, whose future are the Indian and Pakistani protagonists trying to determine? By enlarging the number of negotiators the Kashmir dispute would not just go away but it will be a step forward in the right direction.

Ladakh is a Buddhist area. To preserve their way of life, their religious and cultural integrity, Ladakhis should have maximum autonomy duly guaranteed by India, Pakistan and the international community. No region should be dealt with cavalierly, like a piece of real estate or an inheritance. The people of each of these regions should be permitted freely, and without fear, to express their wishes for the future status of their regions. Speaking for Buddhist Ladakh, its integrity should be guaranteed and its final determination should be made by its people, not by either India or Pakistan.

The bilateral parleys between India and Pakistan, without the representatives of the people concerned themselves, are not only barren, as have been proved upto now, but are sanctioned by depleted moral authority. It is like the victors distributing the spoils of war, and the allies redrawing the map of Europe. The Treaty of Versailles? The gathering of Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill at Yalta? The Kashmiris were never a willing party to the wars between India and Pakistan and Kashmir is not the spoils of war, in any case. The other image is of two suitors claiming a fair maiden but without even a by your leave. What the UN resolutions envisage is analogous to the ancient Indo-Aryan custom of *swayambara*, wherein the assembled

suitors may preen but not grab. They have to wait for the maiden to select the suitor and garland him as her groom.

The U.S. has allowed Puerto Rico to freely determine whether it wants full independence or it wishes to become a state within the U.S. Many states and the U.S. judiciary have been righting the wrongs their ancestors, the boat load of pilgrims and their offspring had perpetrated on the first peoples, the indigenous American Indians, and are granting them financial compensation and also restituting huge tracts of land. The same is the case in Canada, in an even greater measure. On top of that Canada has given the right to the Quebecois to secede if they so desire. In Australia too there are landmark cases where the government and the judiciary have given aborigines land rights and financial compensation, undreamed of only a few years ago.

The British government of Tony Blair has given the Welsh their own parliament and the Scots as much autonomy as they want. If the Scots vote for a separate country, so be it. If the Scots want they can repudiate the Act of Union and go back to a Mary-Queen-of-Scots situation, constitutionally. And the beauty of it is that the English are saying so. It will not be a unilateral fractious Scottish declaration, but an annulment of the Act by mutual consent. The British advocacy of the right to self-determination extends, in this case for their own benefit, to the windswept South Atlantic Falkland Islands too. These islands called the Malvinas by the Argentines, were under continuous Argentine possession for a long time. One day, in 1833, the buccaneering British threw out the Argentine garrison and took possession of the Islands, without any justification. The number of sheep there runs into the thousands: homo sapiens, less than two thousand.

The dispute has been and still is at the U.N. and every year at the U.N. Argentina wins the votes, and Britain loses. However, the British remain the de facto owners. The military President Galtieri of Argentina lost his patience and invaded the Islands in April 1982. The Argentines hailed his action. After all, in their heyday many years ago, they had twice, two years running, successfully repulsed English invasions of Buenos Aires. And now they might as well throw them out of the Malvinas. However, from the Argentine point of view the timing was wrong. Galtieri had not reckoned with domestic English politics. His act of aggression thus provided Margaret Thatcher a chance to boost her flagging popularity. She seized the opportunity and launched a thousand ships, in a manner of speaking.

The outcome between such unequal protagonists was a foregone conclusion, aided and abetted by the fact that the Argentine authorities sent mainly young rookies to the Falklands, and very few veteran soldiers. Yet the Air Force gave a good account of themselves and earned the praise even of their adversaries, the Royal Air Force. The second elected successor after Galtieri, President Menem, recently laid a wreath at the Falklands war memorial in England. He also fulfilled a long held desire: to be received by the Queen. The dispute, however, is not over. To the Argentines, the Malvinas are their patrimony. One day they will get it back. Such is their mindset. They believe they are in the right.

In the Anglo-Saxon world and in most European countries, enlightened and progressive elements have realized that justice must be done, even if it goes against the grain, even if it appears to go against its own ethnic element. This is the trend at least in dealing with ethnic minorities. If and when such noble sentiments find expression in Asian and African societies is a moot point.

In the tangled skein of the partition process the case of the Mongolian fringe or the 'hillpeople' (Tibeto – Burman and Mon-Khmer) of Northeast India had gone by default. This is because there was no vocal lobby to plead their case before the British government of the day; neither in London nor in Delhi. These people and their region, known today as the seven sisters – the Hill Regions of Northeastern India; and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, now in Bangladesh, properly pertain to Central Asia and to Southeast Asia. Taken as a whole they have affinity with China, Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in the north and Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia in the south. They are not really South Asians. The only justification, if any, seems to be the sword; the British conquest of their territories. Before that even of their existence little was known in Aryavarta. Only Manipur is mentioned and parts of Assam but the greater part of Assam itself formed a part of the Burmese Kingdom, until recently; all this, notwithstanding warfare between Burmese, Ahom, Tripura, Arakan and Chakma Kings in those days. And Manipur is spoken of in the *Mahabharata* as an alien kingdom where the hero Arjun goes and wins the hand of the Princess Chitrangada. Of that matrimonial union too like Henry V and Catherine's, there was a son: a brave warrior called Babrubahan.

When the Big White Chief left in August 1947, he would have done well to have pondered a little on their plight – instead of beating a hasty retreat and leaving them to their fate, as they did with the native states. The inevitable consequence has been military invasions, for example in the native states of Hyderabad and Kashmir; and wars of liberation, styled insurgencies in Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram – and in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The northeastern seven sisters, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Arunachal, Meghalaya and Tripura; and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, have little in common with the Indo-Aryan, and Dravidian races and cultures of India or Bangladesh, or with the Bhils, Kols, Mundas and similar aborigines. On the other hand, they have great kinship with the races and cultures of the Mongolian countries in the north and south.

In India these regions have generally been granted a measure of autonomy, varying in degree and in details. After many years of warfare Nagaland and Mizoram seem to have settled down to managing their internal affairs comparatively peaceably, and with huge financial grants from Delhi. Even in the Chittagong Hill Tracts a peace accord was signed in December 1997, though the implementation appears to have bogged down. The Regional Council even with its limited powers has not been set up yet, and the lands of the hillpeople forcefully occupied and settled with the outsiders that had been inducted by the State, have not, except in a very few instances, been returned to the original hillpeople who were the actual owners.

Begum Khaleda Zia, Leader of the Opposition, is virulently anti-accord and wants to scrap the agreement altogether. She seems to think the Hill Tracts is like the head of John the Baptist that the Tetrach Herod has presented to her. At least Salome had to dance for it. What did Begum Khaleda do to inherit the Tracts? She seems to think it is a piece of real estate that she got for a dowry, as King James got Bombay for marrying – who was it, Catherine of Braganza? In any case, Bombay then was home to a very few fishermen only. Hill Tracts are inhabited by hundreds of thousands of indigenous people with their own distinct culture, with a higher literacy rate than the rest of Bangladesh. They also have lots of educated people including doctors, lawyers, engineers, and professors.

The Bodos, in Assam, want a separate homeland, perhaps a state (province) of their own. They could all enjoy autonomy and owe suzerainty to the Big Power – in this case India, and Bangladesh. Whether the map of North Eastern India, in its present configuration is a true reflection of the cultural and historical realities and aspirations of the people of the regions, only the future can tell. Either they will evolve, through enlightened interaction with the paramount power, or they will break away into fragmented homogenous units. As far as Bangladesh and the Hill Tracts are concerned, if the former treats the latter with justice and fair play and grants it meaningful autonomy, things will be fine.

Insofar as Indo-Pakistan relations is concerned, both might ponder on the fate of the frog in the fable. While the frog was away, the little frogs saw a cow pass by. When the frog came back they related their experience of having seen a huge creature. The frog puffed himself up and said, `As big as this.' `No,' chorused the little frogs. `The creature was much bigger.' The big frog puffed himself up more and asked, `As big as this?' `No, bigger.' So the frog puffed himself bigger and bigger, until he burst. He never did become anywhere near the cow in size but he did not know his own limits, or his limitations. To get back to Kashmir. As I advocated earlier, patience and perseverance to both India and Pakistan, and to the people of Kashmir. The two protagonists negotiating by themselves have been like two chattering (persons) at a cocktail gathering; both speak at each other, neither listens. Let at least representatives from the different regions be included in the powwow. Who knows, may be some day they will lay down their tomahawks, and smoke a peace pipe together.

(Daily 'Dawn,' Karachi, 29 December 1998)

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Appendix-III

SENIOR CITIZENS FOUNDATION OF PAKISTAN STALWARTS OF PAKISTAN AWARD 1999

CITATION

RAJA TRIDIV ROY

RAJA TRIDIV ROY THE HERIDITARY RAJA OF CHAKMA TRIBE HAS BEEN RECIPIENT OF MANY HONOURS SINCE HIS EARLY AGE. HE WAS GRANTED HONORARY COMMISSION IN PAKISTAN LAND FORCES AND APPOINTED AID-DE-CAMP TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF PAKISTAN IN 1953.

HE WAS ELECTED TWICE TO THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF FORMER EAST PAKISTAN AND WAS THE ONLY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE AND ONE OF THE TWO NON-AWAMI LEAGUE CANDIDATES WHO WERE SUCCESSFUL IN DECEMBER 1970 ELECTIONS.

HE LED PAKISTAN DELEGATIONS TO A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND ALSO REPRESENTED HIS COUNTRY AT MANY WORLD MOOTS. HE HAS THE UNIQUE HONOUR OF REPRESENTING PAKISTAN AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON THREE OCCASIONS AND LEADING THE HISTORIC DELEGATION IN 1972.

HE HAS BEEN PARTICIPATING IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES OF BUDDHIST COMMUNITY. PRESENTLY HE IS FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF ALL PAKISTAN BUDDHIST SOCIETY.

HE HAS RENDERED VALUABLE SERVICES TO THE COUNTRY AS MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL CABINET, AS ADVISOR FOR TOURISM AND MINISTER FOR MINORITIES.

HE ALSO HELD AMBASSADORIAL ASSIGNMENTS AND ALSO TOURED A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES AS SPECIAL ENVOY FOR PROMOTING BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN RECOGNITION OF HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES, HE WAS APPOINTED AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE IN 1995.

HE HAS AUTHORED A NUMBER OF BOOKS ON CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SUBJECTS.

Sd/- illegible
(H. M. CHOHAN)
SECRETARY GENERAL

Appendix -IV

HAMOOD-UR-REHMAN COMMISSION REPORT

Early in the year 2001 a senior member of the government consulted me and sought my opinion on the desirability or otherwise of publishing the Hamoodur Rehman Inquiry Commission Report, (a three Judge Commission which had been set up on 26 December 1971), and was presented to President Bhutto on 12 July 1972. My advice was that the report should be published. I am happy that the advice of those that were for publication prevailed. Better late than never, as they say.

A Commission of Inquiry into the 1971 war was set up by President Bhutto under Ministry of Presidential Affairs Notification No. 632(1)71, dated 26 December 1971, under the Chairmanship of Justice Hamoodur Rehman, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan. The other two members were Justice Anwarul Haq, Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court and Justice Tufailali Abdur Rahman, Chief Justice of the High Court of Sindh and Balochistan.

Excerpts from the report, as declassified by the Government of Pakistan and published by Vanguard Books Lahore in 2001

"It may be relevant to note that Governor Admiral Ahsan had resigned and so had Lt. Gen. Sahabzada Yaqub Khan who was the General Officer Commanding and Head of the Armed Forces in East Pakistan who had resigned earlier but was asked to hold on until Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan took over from him on 7 March 1971 and Lt. Gen. A. A. K. Niazi in turn took over from Tikka Khan on 11 April 1971 and was the Martial Law Administrator and Head of the Armed Forces in East Pakistan until he surrendered to the Indian Army General Arora on 16 December 1971.

"The Army arrested Sheikh Mujib and transferred him to West Pakistan. As a consequence of the Army action and the civil war thousands of refugees began to flee to India. There followed the Indo-Soviet Defence Pact, the vacillations and diverse delaying tactics at the U.N. and finally the Indian invasion of East Pakistan with an enormous force many times larger than the defending Pakistani Forces, as well as a brief Indo-Pakistan war on the western front. There was a lack of coherent leadership in Pakistan and various factors led to the surrender of the Pakistani forces in Dhaka."

".....Admiral Ahsan's explanation on this point is that when the postponement was announced on the 1st of March, he made desperate efforts to persuade the President to come to Dacca urgently. It was his view, shared by General Yaqub, that not only was the only answer to the problem, a political solution, but that the only other alternative, military action, would have had to be an all out operation, shutting the door finally on political negotiation. Consequently, military action could only be taken if all hope of conferring with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was finally given up. That action could be limited to preventing violence and the forcible interference by the Awami League with the people's ordinary avocations, without

attempting to curb peaceful demonstrations by that party, does not appear to have been feasible either by Admiral Ahsan or General Yaqub. On the 1st March, therefore, the admiral rang to Rawalpindi wishing to speak to the President but was able to contact only General Pirzada who advised him to telephone Karachi where the President then was. At Karachi also he could only contact General Umar who told him that the President was busy but that he said he would pass on the message. He spoke next to General Hamid who professed ignorance of the political developments and, when asked to speak to General Yaqub, said he did not particularly wish to do so. An hour later Admiral Ahsan was informed that he had been relieved. He accordingly handed over to General Yaqub and left Dacca on the 4th March.

"General Yaqub's thinking as to the feasibility of military action after the 1st March, on a comparatively smaller scale was, as we have stated, much the same as that of Admiral Ahsan. He too urged the need of a political solution and advised that the President should come to Dacca immediately. He also advised that no government, without political backing, could possibly control the situation, and the formation of such a government could obviously, as he pointed out, be done only with the President's consent and by his orders. Although he did not put it in so many words, the suggestion is obviously that some kind of provincial government headed by Mujib or his nominee must take over at once. This advice being rejected he resigned on the telephone on the night of the 4th March, and confirmed this by a signal on the 5th announcing his intention to hand over to Major-General Khadim Hussain Raja. He was, however, told to await his relief and accordingly he left Dacca on the 7th after Lt.Gen. (now General) Tikka arrived to take over from him."

Government of Pakistan Cabinet Secretariat
(Cabinet Division) Rawalpindi, the 25th May 1974

No. 107/19/74-Min. Whereas the Commission of Inquiry appointed under the late Ministry of Presidential Affairs' Notification No. 632(1)/71, dated, the 26th December, 1971, had, in its report of the 8th July, 1972, submitted, inter alia, that the Commission's findings with regard to the course of events in East Pakistan were only tentative and recommended that "as and when the Commander Eastern Command and other senior officers now prisoners of war in India are available, a further Inquiry, should be held into the circumstances which led to the surrender in East Pakistan;

And whereas all the prisoners of war and civil internees have now returned to Pakistan;

And whereas the federal government is of the opinion that it is necessary in the light of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry to finalize the said inquiry as to the circumstances which led to the surrender in East Pakistan, after examining any of the said prisoners of war and civil internees whose examination is considered necessary by the Commission;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (I) of Section 3 of the Pakistan Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1956 (VI of 1956), the federal government is pleased to direct that the Commission shall start inquiry at a place and on a date to be fixed by it and complete the inquiry and submit its report to the President of Pakistan, with its findings as to the matter aforesaid, within a period of two months commencing from the date the Commission starts functioning.

Sd/-
Vaqar Ahmad,
Cabinet Secretary.

Excerpts from the subsequent report:

Introduction

The necessity of negotiations was obvious but right from the start for a number of reasons which we do not repeat but amongst which certainly figures predominantly the unrealistic and perhaps fraudulent manner in which the President himself conducted the negotiations, it was obvious that negotiations would finally fail though it does not appear that they were formally declared to have failed on the 25 March, 1971. In the meantime, however, from the 1st March up to this date Sheikh Mujibur Rahman set up what virtually amounted to a parallel government in East Pakistan if not with the encouragement of the President at any rate with his connivance. On page 87 of the Main Report we have set out the directive, which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issued and to which he added from time to time. These clearly show that the Sheikh was being allowed to go from strength to strength with impunity. We were then at a loss to understand, as we still are, as to how a government worth the name could so abdicate authority and allow an organized mob rule to prevail taking no action to protect the life, property and honour of the citizens. The passivity with which the government had allowed the Awami League campaign to continue and the culmination of the state of affairs by this reign of terror took away the sympathies of those who were otherwise in favour of a united Pakistan and was calculated in any case to terrify such people into accepting the Awami League rule as also those who had not the courage to oppose the political aim for which it stood. The beginning then of the political events of the period in question was not only the utter failure to recapture the sympathies of the wavering people but actively to drive them into the opposite camp. This was the prelude to the military action of 25th March 1971.

Magnitude of atrocities

In the circumstances that prevailed in East Pakistan from the 1st of March to the 16th December 1971, it was hardly possible to obtain an accurate estimate of the toll of death and destruction caused by the Awami League militants, and later by the Pakistan Army. It must also be remembered that even after the military action of the 25th of March, 1971, Indian infiltrators and members of the Mukti Bahini sponsored by the Awami League continued to indulge in killings, rape and arson during their

raids on peaceful villages in East Pakistan, not only in order to cause panic and disruption and carry out their plans of subversion, but also to punish those East Pakistani who were not willing to go along with them. In any estimate of the extent of the atrocities alleged to have been committed on the East Pakistani people, the death and destruction caused by the Awami League militants throughout this period and the atrocities committed by them on their own brothers and sisters must, therefore, be always kept in view.

According to the Bangladesh authorities, the Pakistan Army was responsible for killing three million Bengalis and raping 200,000 East Pakistani women. It does not need any elaborate argument to see that these figures are obviously highly exaggerated. So much damage could not have been caused by the entire strength of the Pakistan Army then stationed in East Pakistan, even if it had nothing else to do. In fact, however, the army in East Pakistan was constantly engaged in fighting the Mukti Bahini, the Indian infiltrators, and later the Indian army. It had also the task of running the civil administration, maintaining communications, and feeding 70 million people of East Pakistan. It is, therefore, clear that the figures mentioned by the Dacca authorities are altogether fantastic and fanciful.

Different figures were mentioned by different persons in authority but the latest statement supplied to us by the GHQ shows approximately 26,000 persons killed during action by the Pakistan Army. This figure is based on the situation reports submitted from time to time by the Eastern Command to General Headquarters. It is possible that even these figures may contain an element of exaggeration, as the lower formations may have tended to magnify their own achievement in quelling the rebellion. However in the absence of any other reliable data, the Commission is of the view that the latest figure supplied by the GHQ should be accepted. An important consideration which has influenced us in accepting this figure as reasonably correct is the fact that the reports were sent from East Pakistan to GHQ at a time when the army officers in East Pakistan could have had no notion whatsoever of any accountability in this behalf.

The falsity of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's repeated allegation that the Pakistani troops had raped 200,000 Bengali girls in 1971 was borne out when the abortion team he had commissioned from Britain in early 1972 found that its workload involved the termination of only a hundred or more pregnancies.

Conclusions and recommendations

From what we have said in the preceding paragraphs it is clear that there is substance in the allegation that during and after the military action excesses were indeed committed on the people of East Pakistan, although the versions and estimates put forward by the Dacca authorities are highly coloured and exaggerated. Some of the incidents alleged by those authorities did not take place at all, and on others a fanciful interpretation has been deliberately placed for the purpose of maligning the Pakistan Army and gaining world sympathy. We have also found that strong

provocation was offered to the army owing to the misdeeds of the militants of the Awami League. It has also to be stated that use of force was undoubtedly inherent in the military action required to restore the authority of the federal government. Nevertheless, in spite of all these factors, we are of the view that the officers charged with the task of restoring the law and order were under an obligation to act with restraint and to employ only the minimum force necessary for the purpose. No amount of provocation by the militants of the Awami League or other miscreants could justify retaliation by a disciplined army against its own people. The Pakistan Army was called upon to operate in Pakistan territory, and could not, therefore, be permitted to behave as if it was dealing with external aggression, or operating on enemy soil. Irrespective, therefore, of the magnitude of the atrocities, we are of the considered opinion that it is necessary for the government of Pakistan to take effective action to punish those who were responsible for the commission of these alleged excesses and atrocities.

Inquiries and trials

On the basis of the evidence coming before the Commission, we have been able to indicate only in general terms the direct and indirect responsibility of certain senior commanders and others, but the questions of fixing responsibility individually and awarding punishment appropriate thereto need to be determined according to the prescribed procedures available under the Pakistan Army Act and other applicable laws of the land. We would, accordingly, reiterate the recommendation made by us in paragraph 7 of Chapter III of Part V of the main report that the government of Pakistan should set up a high powered Court or Commission of Inquiry to investigate into these allegations, and to hold trials of those who indulged in these atrocities, brought a bad name to the Pakistan Army and alienated the sympathies of the local population by their acts of wanton cruelty and immorality against our own people. The composition of the Court of Inquiry, if not its proceedings, should be publicly announced so as to satisfy national conscience and international opinion.

The Commission feels that sufficient evidence is now available in Pakistan for a fruitful inquiry to be undertaken in this regard. As the Government of Bangladesh has since been recognized by Pakistan, it may also be feasible to request the Dacca authorities to forward to this Court of Inquiry whatever evidence may be available with them.

Need and justification for trial and punishment

Having heard the views of a large number of witnesses drawn from all sections of society, professions and services, the Commission feels that there is a consensus on the imperative need of bringing to book those senior army commanders who have brought disgrace and defeat to Pakistan by their professional incompetence, culpable negligence and wilful neglect in the performance of their duties, and physical and moral cowardice in abandoning the fight when they had the capability and resources to resist the enemy. We are also of the view that proper and

firm disciplinary action, and not merely retirement from service, is necessary to ensure against any future recurrence of the kind of shameful conduct displayed during the 1971 war. We believe that such action would not only satisfy the nation's demand for punishment where it is deserved, but would also serve to emphasize the concept of professional accountability which appears to have been forgotten by senior army officers since their involvement in politics, civil administration and Martial Law duties.

We have found as a result of a detailed analysis of the events surrounding the imposition of the second Martial Law by Gen. Yahya Khan on the 25th of March, 1969, that he did not take over the country in order merely to restore normal conditions and re-introduce the democratic process. He did so with a view to obtaining personal power and those who assisted him did so with full knowledge of his intentions. The fresh evidence recorded by us has only served to strengthen this conclusion as to the intentions of Gen. Yahya Khan.

All the senior army commanders, who were concerned with the administration of Martial Law in East Pakistan, as well as the senior civil servants who were inducted into the civil administration in East Pakistan, have expressed the view that military action could not have been substitute for a political settlement, which was feasible once law and order had been restored within a matter of a few weeks after the military action. Most of these witnesses have stated that the most favourable time for a political settlement was between the months of May and September 1971, during which a reasonable amount of normalcy had been restored, and the authority of the government had been re-established at least in most of the urban areas, if not throughout the countryside. However, no effort was made during these months to start a political dialogue with the elected representatives of the people of East Pakistan; instead fraudulent and useless measures were adopted.

The use of excessive force during the military action and the conduct of some of the officers and men of the Pakistan Army during the sweep operations had only served to alienate the sympathies of the people of East Pakistan. The practice of the troops living off the land, in the absence of a proper organization of their own logistic arrangements during their operations in the countryside, encouraged the troops to indulge in looting. The arbitrary methods adopted by the Martial Law administration in dealing with respectable East Pakistanis, and their sudden disappearances by a process euphemistically called "being sent to Bangladesh" made matters worse. The attitude of the army authorities towards the Hindu minority also resulted in a large-scale exodus to India. The avowed intention of India to dismember Pakistan was only too well known, but even then the need for early political settlement was not realized by Gen. Yahya Khan. The general amnesty declared by him in August 1971, proved ineffective, as it was declared too late, and left much to be desired in its implementation. It did not result in the return of any appreciable number of the elected representatives of the people, who were in any case valuable hostages in the hands of the Indian authorities who did not allow them to cross back into Pakistan.

Precious months were thus wasted, during which the Indians mounted their training programme for the Mukti Bahini and started guerilla raids into Pakistan territory. Gen. Yahya Khan then embarked upon his scheme of by-elections in place of the disqualified Awami League representatives, but these by-elections were an exercise in futility, for the reason that they were supervised and controlled by the Martial Law Administration, and even the selection of the candidates was being made by a Major General of the Pakistan Army. In these circumstances, these newly elected representatives did not have any authority to speak on behalf of the people.

Apart, therefore, from the immorality and political inexpediency of the kind of military action taken by Gen. Yahya Khan on the 25th of March, 1971, it was his culpable failure to arrive at a political settlement with the Awami League during the crucial months preceding the war that completely alienated the sympathies of the population of East Pakistanis, confirming their suspicion that the Generals were not prepared to part with political power in favour of the elected representatives of the people.

The refusal of Gen. Yahya Khan to negotiate with the Awami League becomes all the more significant when we remember that two of its top leaders, namely, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Dr Kamal Hosain were in his custody in West Pakistan, and that almost all the friendly countries had advised him to arrive at a political settlement in view of the looming Indian threat of military action.

The two direct and devastating consequences of this political situation brought about by the military regime itself, since holding the elections of 1970, were the prolonged involvement of the Pakistan Army in counter-insurgency measures throughout the province, and its forced deployment in penny-packets all along the borders of East Pakistan to prevent infiltration of Mukti Bahini and Indian agents. In the presence of these two factors, the Pakistan Army was obviously fighting a losing battle from the very start.

International aspect

After exhaustively reviewing the state of our international relations as they existed immediately preceding the war, we had expressed the opinion, in the main report, that in the background of our relations with India ever since 1947 it should not have been too difficult to appreciate that India would do every thing to precipitate a crisis in East Pakistan.

We also took note of the various efforts made by India to internationalize the refugee problem, which had arisen as a result of the exodus of people from East Pakistan to India in the wake of the military action. The Indian propaganda was so successful that all efforts made by the military regime in Pakistan to defuse the situation in East Pakistan left the world unimpressed. The situation was further complicated by the mutual assistance treaty signed between India and USSR in August 1971. All the governments friendly to Pakistan, especially, Iran, China and

the USA, had made it clear to Gen. Yahya Khan that they would not be in a position to render any physical assistance to Pakistan in the event of an armed conflict with India. However, the significance of this international situation was unfortunately completely lost on Gen. Yahya Khan and his associates. They blundered ahead, oblivious of the fatal consequences of their international isolation.

In the main report we also dealt with the activities at the United Nations during the critical days of the war, and came to the conclusion that there was no rational explanation why Gen. Yahya Khan did not take the dispute to the Security Council immediately after the Indian invasion of East Pakistan on November 21, 1971, nor was it possible to explain his refusal to accept the first Russian resolution, if indeed the situation in East Pakistan had become so critical that surrender was inevitable. In this context we also referred to the message, which was handed over by Maj-Gen Farman Ali to Paul Marc Henry, representative of the United Nations at Dacca, for onward transmission to the Secretary General of the United Nations, offering certain proposals for a political settlement in East Pakistan. Finally, we expressed the opinion that if Gen. Yahya Khan as Commander-in-Chief of the Army had shown a greater determination and courage and directed the Eastern Command to hold on somewhat longer than December 16, 1971, it was quite possible that a satisfactory solution ordering a ceasefire might have been obtained from the Security Council.

During the present phase of our inquiry nothing has been said by the witnesses about the state of our international relations and their impact on the 1971 war, nor about the moves at the United Nations except that Maj. Gen. Farman Ali has clarified the position with regard to the message attributed to him. He has stated that the message was drafted under the instructions of the Governor of East Pakistan who had been authorized by the President of Pakistan to offer proposals for a political settlement with the Awami League, and that he handed over a copy of the same to Paul Marc Henry as directed by the Governor of East Pakistan. While this clarification removes the mystery surrounding the so-called 'Farman Ali incident' it does not in any manner affect the conclusions already stated by us in the main report as regards the international aspect.

Appendix-V

A TALK ON "BUDDHIST WISDOM FOR PRESENT TIMES" DELIVERED BY RAJA TRIDIV ROY (FOUNDER PRESIDENT ALL PAKISTAN BUDDHIST SOCIETY) ORGANIZED BY THE ASIAN STUDY GROUP, ISLAMABAD

Ancient Buddhist wisdom is being applied to fields as diverse as physics and ecology as well as to everyday living. We have invited Raja Tridiv Roy to talk on what Buddhism tells us about present day problems, especially in relation to the conflicts that we face in the world today.

CONFLICTS, CAUSES AND REMEDIES

Conflict is suffering. Nearness of an unwanted person is suffering. The absence of a loved one is suffering. To get what one does not wish for and conversely not to get what one desires is suffering. Suffering is universal and it is an integral component of the human state. The root causes of conflict and suffering are ignorance and craving. These two forces in turn induce greed, hatred, infatuation, involving attachment to persons, objects, and concepts. One of the most negative of attachments is to the illusion of an immutable, permanent self, when actually there is nothing that is permanent or changeless and everything is in a continuous state of flux, change, transformation. Apart from confliction situations that we encounter in life there are often conflicts within us that we have to contend with. Why are there conflicts? Is it possible to eradicate them? Let us examine what constitutes the individual, that is, the subject that suffers, then try and prescribe the remedial measures.

In 460 BC, Heraclitus, a philosopher, was reported to have said that the same man never enters the same river twice. When he enters the river the second or third or any number of times after the first, neither is he the same man nor is the river the same. This is self-evident because we are told that every seven years our body renews itself down to the smallest cells. The river is such because the body of water is confined and contained within the two banks. Yet, not one drop of water is ever in the same place on its journey downstream. In its manifested form only, it may appear to be the same man and the same river. A favourite Buddhist simile of change and continuity is the flame, ever the same yet never the same. And continuity, or the appearance of sameness is also illusory. It is but a succession of phenomena, like a movie film that is a series of single shots.

An individual is a composite, a coming together of material phenomena and immaterial faculties, and is designated as Name and Form. The faculties of sensation, perception, volition and consciousness combine with the elements of earth, air, fire and water and we have the individual. In the 2nd Century B.C., in the famous debate with the Greek King Menander, held in Charsadda in the present day North West

Frontier Province, the monk Nagasena describes an individual as being like a chariot, or a flame. The individual does not have a permanent soul and is subject to the law of constant change and transformation. Life is an unceasing flow, a succession of thought moments.

Modern day physicists tell us that when they study the behaviour of sub-atomic particles there comes a stage when a particle exists and does not exist at the same time, depending on whether there is an external observer. When no one is observing, and this includes not only a human observer but a camera also, the particle does not exist. The moment an observer, even a camera, focuses on it, it comes into existence. This underlines the insubstantiality of existence and the relativity of existence. We can therefore deduce from this that existence and non-existence are two facets of something which is one or both or none. Einstein's equation E = MC2 more or less says the same thing. Energy and matter are different forms or aspects of the same. Even the ray of the sun that travels at a constant speed has now been captured by scientists. They say the speed is slowed to a stop and can be stored. Sunbeams will be bottled and sold like Coca Cola soon.

There is no permanent self but the individual is subject to the law of cause and effect. Existence is conditioned. And how is it conditioned? Not by fiat, not by whims, but by one's own actions. "As we sow, so we reap" about sums it up. The law of cause and effect is called Karma. The Buddhist view is that one performs positive, neutral and negative actions by thought, speech and deed. The effects or consequences are in consonance with the strength and degree of those actions. The time gap or fruition of the consequence of each action naturally varies in the dimension of time. Some results can be immediate, like firing a bullet, others may take years, like slow arsenic poisoning; still others like planting a sapling and its maturation by when the individual may not be alive. Yet the result reaches the individual and one cannot escape the consequence of one's action even if one has discarded the present form. This means that it catches up with one in a future life.

Life manifests itself in the world of animals and mankind, in the world of gods and angels, in the higher spheres of the formless world, and in the world of spirits and in hells. An individual travels up and down the wheel of life according to one's actions. "Just is the law, swerving not a hair." This saying means that Karma is a self-sufficient and self-executing law in which one is responsible for one's own actions and not anyone else. One is one's own prosecutor, defence lawyer and judge. There is no intervention by external forces between action and consequence.

So then how should we conduct ourselves? How can we overcome the negative forces of greed, hatred and delusion? We can, by and with equity and justice, compassion and generosity, moral and ethical conduct, contemplation and meditation. What is the so called noble eightfold path? The path consists of right view, aspiration, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration. Monks and ascetics that have renounced the world practise more precepts but lay folk are advised to observe five. They are enjoined to abstain from taking life, from taking

anything unlawfully (stealing), wrongful sexual conduct, telling untruths (or indulging in slander, hateful or mischief making words), and intoxicants. One is advised to inculcate an amicable and helpful attitude, sympathy and compassion, cheerfulness and equanimity.

It is somewhat frightening to accept a concept of no-soul because we tend to equate such a situation with annihilation. However, a slowly dawning awareness of the absence of a permanent ego entity leads to the realization of the insubstantiality of all phenomena. Once grasped, this leads to a lessening of tension and conflict, internal as well as external. A sharper awareness results and an expansion of vision leading toward quiescence and tranquillity.

There is no beginning nor a first cause, only a cyclic integration and disintegration. The chicken and the egg or the tree and the seed are merely succession of phenomena in various permutations and combinations. Nothing is self-existent and everything is interdependent. One considers this state of interdependence, like the oil, the wick and the flame. The Buddha says existence is the manifestation of the Law of Dependent Origination. One element coming into existence is itself the cause of another, ad infinitum, in the Wheel of Life. Sunday is the consequence of Saturday and the cause of Monday. Childhood is the cause of adolescence and the consequence of infancy. The cause of death is birth, and one follows the other ceaselessly. The relative reality of all experience is not denied, only that it is a process of cause and effect operating in conditioned existence. Beyond the realm of relativity is Suchness, Sunyata, the Plenum Void that the dialectician Nagarjuna expounds in his doctrine of the Void.

There is the faculty of seeing and the object that is seen. The seer exists in dependent relation to the seeing and the seen, and does not exist per se. If there is nothing to be seen or there is no seeing, there is then no seer. There is thinking and there is thought and together they give birth to the idea of a thinker. Descartes' observation, "I think, therefore I am" is not denied in Buddhism, but the `I' is defined and analyzed not to a permanent eternal soul in, on or around a body, but to a succession of thought moments. Each, an infinitesimal fraction of a millisecond, passes through three stages; a coming into being, an existence and a dissolution. The three stages succeed one another rapidly and ceaselessly. Everything from the smallest sub-atomic particle to the universe is subject to this process of birth, existence and dissolution. Nothing is unchangeable, eternal, permanent, except Nirvana, which can be achieved by everyone. However, there is no I or you, nor past nor future – it is the Unborn, Unformed, Unbecome, Unconditioned.

When one confronts an image, an object, or a situation of strife, within or without, one should first try to view it in its wholeness and identify and recognize it for what it is. When we see a beautiful flower we should recognize its beauty but with the vision of knowledge and understanding we should be aware also that the inherent nature of the flower is that it must wither and disintegrate. In the same manner when we are faced with the attraction of material gain or the prospect of

sensual pleasure we might ponder on the fact that material wealth and pleasures are ephemeral. Said the poet, "Pleasures are like poppies spread, seize the flower its bloom is shed." We can have pleasure but without being its slave, in the correct mode and manner. Even a good thing is for its correct use, not for cultivating an undue attachment to it. The Buddha advised us to avoid getting too attached to anything, even to religion. He compares it to a raft that helps one cross to the other shore. When one has crossed the troubled waters one does not carry the raft on one's shoulders.

To overcome greed, hatred and delusion, to evade the tentacles of ignorance and craving and to proceed toward self-improvement, we are advised to avoid extremes and inculcate a balanced attitude and mode of life by adopting the golden mean. Too much courage is equated with rashness, too little with cowardice. The happy mean is bravery. Similarly, too much spending would constitute being a spendthrift, too little, a miser.

The attribute used most often to describe the Buddha is "compassion." He said that one should feel toward all sentient beings as a mother feels for her only child. Just as a mother would do all she could for the welfare of her child so should one for any living being. We should strive to cultivate such an attitude so that we progress through the four stages; the stream winner, the once returner, the non-returner, then the final stage leading to the ineffable bliss of Nirvana – in poetic terms, "the Peace that Passeth Understanding."

External conflicts are often manifestations of the interactions between pride, lust, anger and greed in and between individuals, institutions and nations. If Costa Rica can exist without an army why not so many other countries which spend huge sums of money purportedly for defending their territory, even at the cost of denying their citizens food, clothing, shelter and education? In February 1923, 60 countries met in Geneva for the first Disarmament Conference. Today, after World War II and so many other armed conflicts, the Conference still takes place every year. Half a dozen of the world's most powerful nations are active exporters of arms, earning billions of dollars every year, and the figure is on the rise. Since they themselves are so active in this death selling business, how do they propose to achieve disarmament and promote peace among nations?

While there is much talk about nuclear disarmament and displeasure at countries acquiring nuclear know-how, the nuclear powers themselves do not offer to destroy their existing nuclear stockpiles. Whereas there is a lot of preaching about peace and the resolution of conflicts through negotiations and the avoidance of force, none of the Big Powers with advanced technology in armament production has volunteered to eschew the arms trade. The rich nations sell and the poor nations buy, in order to kill each other either now or in the future.

Even in the twentieth century we have had two world wars and countless lesser armed conflicts. We have seen the devastation caused by atomic explosions. It

has been conclusively proved time and again that a military solution is neither the complete nor the just and humane solution to any conflict, and merely breeds more dissensions. In Pakistan, for instance, out of 140 million people, more than one third live below the poverty line. There are many third world countries which are in the same boat or even worse off, yet they spend huge sums on armaments and related defence oriented matters, in the process piling up their ever-increasing external debts.

The UN's top arms control envoy recently said at a conference in Cambodia: Global military expenditure began rising from 1997 and now stand at about 800 billion dollars a year. 70% are sold to third world countries. Only arms transfer agreements were $ 16.8 billion in 1998 to $ 20.6 billion in 1999. He also said, and I quote, "By comparison, some UN agencies estimate that it would require an additional $ 70 to 80 billion per year to provide primary education, low-cost water, sanitation and public health facilities and reproduction health, family planning and clinical services to all those in need."

Peace between peoples and nations cannot be preserved merely by arming themselves or by the balance of terror or the threat of war. History shows that a mere balance or imbalance of arms has never resolved conflicts nor preserved peace. Otherwise we would not have had the two world wars or wars before or since. The Hutus and the Tutsis are a case in point. Even if they were denied guns they would still slaughter one another with machetes or bows and arrows. If they couldn't find even these implements they would go for each other with sticks and stones. In the olden days when humans lived in caves they killed. Even before, Cain killed his own brother, Abel.

The answer to conflicts is social and economic justice and equity, tempered with compassion, a greater degree of tolerance and accommodation, strengthening of existing mechanisms and the adoption of new measures to keep individuals and nations in line. Due to the disregard for ecological balance and the abuse of nature, as is now the case in most of the world, and because of corruption and wrong policies of the leadership in most third world countries, the day is not far off when we will suffer decimation through pestilence and violence. Parts of Africa today provide a preview, and a warning. A small proportion will continue to emigrate to greener pastures, but for the vast majority in Asia, Africa and Latin America, if not overtaken by nuclear disaster, the above is the gloomy but probable prognosis.

In the World Trade Organization there is a widening divergence of views between the rich countries and the poor. Not only are the poor countries getting more impoverished by the day and their citizens dying of hunger and disease including AIDS, but they are also getting deeper into debt. Some of the affluent nations, on the other hand, are by omissions rather than commissions encouraging this process, perhaps under the impression that numerical diminution of the hungry hordes will ensure them a larger slice of the cake. A glimmer of hope lies in administering strong doses of economic and social justice now, worldwide, before it is too late. Is it likely? Not really. But still, let us hope, let us endeavour. Never say die.

In today's world there are millions and millions of the sick and hungry with neither medicine nor food whereas there are billions of dollars being spent on nuclear weapons, missiles and other sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. We should pause and reflect on our warped norms and values. A painting may cost millions of dollars, a boxer can earn millions for a single bout or a movie star for a role in one film. Corrupt politicians have stashed away billions. One first lady did own thousands of pairs of shoes. And how about the personal wealth of the ten richest in the world? If we tot up these amounts, and the money earned through armament exports in one year by six countries alone, we can begin to think again. When society permits such inexcusable imbalances, surely we are heading for disaster.

Should not there be some balance, some sobriety in an individual's and a society's pernicious spending sprees and styles? Obviously strong remedial measures are called for. If we do not act now, we are all doomed – the rich and the poor. Everyone knows that only a small fraction of the existing nuclear arsenal is more than enough to wipe out all forms of existence on earth for many years to come. With the increased knowledge in technology we are now at a stage in the history of human development when we are too powerful for our own good and might self-destruct at any moment by accident or by design.

For a more just world order, and a chance of survival, and peace, we need to strengthen the United Nations and related international organizations like Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Governments must give up some of their arbitrary and absolute powers over their citizens and their institutions. Nation States require to be more receptive to effective international monitoring and supervision, as well as strengthening of regional and a wider and more equitable international trade and co-operation. Some measures that may be considered for adoption are:

1. Ban on the export of armaments;
2. Establishing an International Criminal Court of Justice for trial and punishment of human rights violators, anywhere in the world;
3. An international body of Ombudsmen to protect citizens' rights against their governments, as well as to try the corrupt, anywhere in the world;
4. A mechanism to promote fair and equitable international trade and necessary modifications in the functioning of WTO and allied international institutions;
5. An international body of experts to supervise the use of funds of IMF, World Bank, Regional Development Banks, and all internationally aided projects worldwide;
6. The setting up of a UN Force for rapid as well as preventive deployment anywhere in the world.

(26 February 2001)

Appendix-VI

TRIDIV CALLS FOR END TO ARMS RACE

Article in Daily "The News", Islamabad, Thursday, 1 March 2001

M. Arshad Sharif

ISLAMABAD: There are millions and millions of the sick and hungry with neither medicine nor food, whereas billions of dollars are being spent on nuclear weapons, missiles and other sophisticated weapons of mass destruction, said the founder president of the All Pakistan Buddhist Society and Pakistan's Ambassador-at-Large, Raja Tridiv Roy.

In a lecture organized as part of the monthly feature of the Asian Study Group's comparative religions forum, Raja Tridiv Roy said that according to the Buddhist philosophy of life, external conflicts are often manifestations of the interactions between pride, lust, anger and greed in and between individuals, institutions and nations. He asked that if Costa Rica can exist without an army why not so many other countries which spend large amounts of money purportedly for defending their territory even at the cost of denying their citizens food, clothing, shelter and education do the same.

Exposing the hypocrisy of the states wishing to pursue arms build-up, he said that in February 1923, sixty countries met in Geneva for the first Disarmament Conference. "Today, after World War II and so many other armed conflicts, the conference still takes place every year." This is in the backdrop of the fact that half a dozen of the world's most powerful nations, which propose to achieve disarmament and promote peace among nations, are active exporters of arms, earning billions of dollars, he said.

To further substantiate his assertion, Raja Tridiv Roy, while citing the figures of the United Nations, said that the global military expenditure began increasing in 1997 and now stands at 800 billion dollars per year. 70% of the arms are sold to the third world countries. The value of arms transfer agreements rose from 16.8 billion in 1998 to 20.6 billion dollars in 1999, he said, while adding that some UN agencies estimate that it will require an additional $70 to $80 billion per year to provide primary education, low cost water, sanitation, public health facilities, family planning and clinical services to all those in need.

For the establishment of equitable international trade and cooperation among the peoples of the world, he recommended a ban on the export of armaments and establishment of an International Criminal Court of Justice for trial and punishment of human rights violators.

Appendix-VII

A PAKISTANI BY CHOICE

Raja Tridiv Roy

Huma Khawar

The Chakma House, in sector E/7 of Islamabad is a quiet place with domestic help moving in and out of the house at all times. This is the house of Raja Tridiv Roy, the Chief of the Chakma tribe, from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, of former East Pakistan and now, Bangladesh.

In the early 70s Raja sahib's house used to be abuzz with activity – parties, dinners and what not. A Federal Minister in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's cabinet, the Raja was quite a rake in his hey days. He was also known to be ZAB's blue-eyed boy. Rumours have it that he was offered the President's chair by ZAB himself, which Raja Tridiv politiely declined.

After ZAB's tenure, Raja sahib served as Ambassador to South American countries. Back in 1996 he was designated Ambassador-at-Large and has been here since, enjoying a 'quiet life' in Islamabad, which includes playing bridge, going for walks and attending occasional parties. The word occasional sounds quite inappropriate, is in variance with his personality and he confesses, "I used to be a partygoer earlier on, but now I enjoy the pleasure of attending just a few select parties."

As we sit down for the interview in his drawing room, he relates the story of his people in the Hill Tracts about whom he feels very strongly. "Chittagong Hill Tracts, a tribal area, is the home of many indigenous people, outside the purview of the central or provincial legislatures. Although our population is small, almost one tenth of the size of entire Bangladesh, the percentage of literacy is higher than that of entire Bangladesh." He vividly recollects their lifestyle in the pre Partition days, which was very different from their present one.

The 13 different tribes, majority of whom are Buddhist, are all distinctive in their own ways, but who together had a sense of unity and oneness. They had a totally different style of life from those of the plains. Laws that were enacted in the plains did not apply to the hillpeople who lived in traditional style. Each culture and religion had respect and protection. There was a great deal of internal autonomy and the British government kept on enacting different laws and safeguards to protect the hillpeople from the more advanced plains. These people included Hindu Bengalis as well as Muslim Bengalis.

After Independence, the Pakistan government continued the same pattern of administration and in the constitution their special status was maintained as a tribal area. Then later through an amendment somehow it was taken out of the tribal area category. "It was unconstitutional, and without ascertaining the wishes of the people, the NA quietly brought in an amendment." Even after so many years one can feel the anger in his voice.

After the creation of Bangladesh, these people represented by their leaders demanded autonomy from Sheikh Mujib, who unfortunately was not prepared for it. This resulted in exploitation, frustration, oppression and atrocities. As a result, these people fought a guerilla war with the Bangladesh government that resulted in a great loss of life on both sides.

In 1997 a peace accord was signed between the BD government and the Shanti Bahini, the main guerilla force of the Hillpeople. "Ever since- although there is no actual warfare now- there is a simmering unrest because the implementation has been very slow and incomplete on part of the BD government." He hopes the Human Rights organizations and the new Bangladeshi government provides them active support.

In 1970, Raja sahib contested the elections and was elected to the National Assembly of the united Pakistan in the elections of 1970. "There were only two persons elected who did not belong to the Awami League – Nurul Amin and myself." In '71, when Raja sahib came to Dhaka for the first NA session, it was postponed. "Soon after that trouble started, resulting in unrest, strikes, the raising of black flags etc. For the people of East Pakistan this postponement meant not giving power to the representatives of the Eastern wing who had won the majority seats."

In November '71, Raja Tridiv Roy was sent as a special envoy of Pakistan to exert pressure on the foreign countries to work for a negotiated settlement between the two wings. "We did not want the country to break. We wanted a negotiated settlement so that the problems of East Pakistan could be resolved." While he was still in Bangkok the war between India and Paksitan broke out and thus the invasion of East Pakistan on December 16, 1971.

On his way back from Thailand, on December 20, he heard the first broadcast by the new President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. "In his first address to the nation, he mentioned that he wanted to have a discussion with the two representatives of East Pakistan and mentioned his name. Raja Tridiv came back to Pakistan through Kabul and motored from Peshawar to Islamabad. The following day he went to the President House to see Mr Bhutto. "We discussed the situation in the country and then he offered me to join his cabinet, to which I agreed." Thus Raja sahib joined the first elected government in the history of Pakistan. He took over as Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs and Tourism and served till 1974. Later he carried on as advisor with the same portfolio. In 1972 he was sent to the UN as leader of the Pakistan delegation. This was the post war period and there were two issues;

one to get back the 90,000 Prisoners of War from India and the other was the recognition and admission of Bangladesh to the United Nations.

"We succeeded in trying to get the various nations of the world to understand our point of view. We wre not opposing the admission of BD but only linking it to the return of the POWs. Through various negotiations at the UN, which lasted over months, we managed to get them to link the two events. One became conditional on the other," he said.

In October 1981, he left as Pakistan's Ambassador to Argentina (concurrently to Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Uruguay) and remained there till his retirement in 1995. "So you can say I served the government, or rather the state of Pakistan till 95 but never joined any political party. I was an independent candidate and wanted to remain independent."

Raja saheb has had visits from his family members off and on, but his wife who is in Dhaka most of the time, taking care of the two grandchildren keeps coming and going. The eldest of his three sons, a Barrister-at-law succeeded him as the Chakma Chief which is a hereditary office.

Ours was the biggest and the most advanced tribe in the Hill Tracts, almost 50 per cent of the total hill population, most of them Buddhist," A sombre mood sets in as he shares his hurt and disappointment for his people. "We were not only a religious ethnic minority, but we also were a minority who had our own area, our own culture, we had a certain homogeneity and we had enjoyed traditional autonomy from time immemorial. It's not that we were a part of the minority of the nation. We were a majority in our own area."

Speaking from experience as Minister of Minorities, he says the minorities in Pakistan require their problems to be looked into in depth. "I feel there should be a minority commission headed by a Supreme Court judge and comprising other members from minority communities to go into the issues related to minorities and their problems of today. Minorities have problems everywhere in the world. It depends where you are. If you are in a sophisticated, advanced country your problems are less and of a different nature. Each government is judged by the way they treat their minority community. That is an international measure."

Speaking on the blasphemy law, he says, "It is a law which would never have been in the statute book if the Quaid-i-Azam had been alive, or if any of the people who made Pakistan had their say in it today." Many cases of blasphemy laws have been reported in which Christian minorities have been victimized for material reasons. Other than that too the minorities have many things happening to them, which are unsatisfactory. I feel that a datailed examination of their problem is necessary by a powerfully constituted authority."

Any regrets? No. Life is like that. You take it as it comes. No regrets for any decision that I have taken on my main activities. There are small regrets for things I could have or should have done differently. But those relate more to matters of personal life and not to my political decisions. Once I came back I had already settled in Pakistan."

While in Bangkok, he relates how he was offered to join a group of Bengalis who were taking oath of loyalty to BD and pakistan's Ambassador to the Philippines wanted him to attend that lunch and defect to BD. "I told him, you are speaking to a Pakistani envoy. If I wanted to go back to East pakistan that became BD I would come back to Pakistan and then go. I will not defect."

Did his family have any input in his decision? "When I was here it was a difficult time for them. Not only the family but also the whole Hill Tracts population." He was offered tempting assignments by the Mujib government and when he resisted he was threatened that his family back home in the Hill Tracts would suffer. But he didn't relent. He admits, "From the time I decided to stay, I had a life, which was totally isolated. But there was no looking back. I am a Pakistani and will always be a Pakistani."

(The Review, Dawn, 17-23 May 2001)

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Appendix-VIII

REFERENDUM 2002

By Ardeshir Cowasjee

The Big Khaki Chief has spoken. His word is law. A referendum will be held next month. The preamble, the question, has been drafted by none other than my friend, Jadoogar of Jeddah Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada. Lt us hope that this time round he has done a better job.

The question: do the people of Pakistan want General Pervez Musharraf with them in a seat of power for a further period of five years? Our president general is sound of mind, nimble, with swift and sound reflexes; he is neither a bigot nor does he fear the bigots who surround him, he has not dipped his fingers into our exchequer (though this may be difficult to say of some of his officers who he trusts and has appointed). There is no alternative. It is unthinkable that he could be replaced by any of the current crooks, the former plunderers of the national till, now jockeying for power and position. He should have the vote of all sane people who do have their and their country's best interests at heart. As things stand he should gain the popular vote. But, however honestly conducted, the results of the referendum will be suspect to his detractors and to his enemies.

In his support, one of our national newspapers in an editorial yesterday summed up: "Therefore, while the President enjoys US support no matter what he does this is not a reliable source of strength. The best source is always the people's goodwill. To achieve this, the government should not use its licence to do what it wants, but should conduct the coming referendum so fairly and transparently that the exercise impresses the people of Pakistan."

Now, in one lifetime, how many times can a commentator on the national scene write the same thing over and over again? But it has to be done.

Every citizen of this country who can read, write and think, can say without any fear of contradiction that it is, and always has been, the intent of all our leaders (barring the first), to enforce their will to tailor the Constitution and all laws of the land and to interpret them to suit their own particular needs so that they may remain in power perpetually. During the early years, the leaders did make some sort of effort to pretend that they had the interests of the country and its people at heart, bogus though it may have been, but since 1971 even this pretence was discarded. Thereafter, we had total blatant glasnost, machinations, schemes and scams were publicly, fearlessly and contemptuously aired.

There is no doubt that our mangled and maligned Constitution is in dire need of a thorough overhaul and a rewriting. For instance, according to Article 62 a person shall not be qualified to be elected or chosen as a member of parliament unless "(f) he is sagacious, righteous, non-profligate, and honest and *ameen*;". Under this

particular sub-section alone, 99 per cent of those elected from 1988 onwards who have sat in our assemblies are manifestly unqualified to stand for election.

And it must never be forgotten that on August 14, 1973, the date on which Democrat Zulfikar Ali Bhutto proudly promulgated the Constitution that is still with us, that within four hours of its promulgation, the people of Pakistan were deprived of all their constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights through a gazette notification issued by the promulgator himself, the same Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Fundamental rights have been rendered non-justifiable, he had all his political opponents arrested. They were held in various jails until released by Zia four years later.

Also to be remembered: according to the rules of procedure that govern parliamentary procedure under the 1973 Constitution, a bill, other than a finance bill, upon its introduction in the House must be referred to the relevant standing committee, unless the requirements of the rules have been dispensed with by the House through a motion of the relevant member. The standing committee is asked to present its report within 30 days. When this is received, copies of the bill (and any changes recommended by the committee) are to be supplied to each member within seven days. Two clear days must then elapse before the bill can be sent down for motion.

These rules were suspended by Bhutto for the passage of the Second, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Amendment Bills. The First Amendment Bill was introduced in the House on April 15, 1974. The standing committee presented its report the next day and within a week it was passed leaving no time for debate. The Third Amendment Bill was introduced on February 11, 1975, the required report was presented and the Bill passed the next day.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution passed on September 21, 1974 deliberately infringed upon the rights of an entire community — the Ahmadis — rights that are recognized by the world at large and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The community was shorn of its majority rights and declared a minority, after having existed as a part of the majority for 27 years since the birth of Pakistan in 1947. By the stroke of a pen, it was declared that an Ahmadi "is not a Muslim for the purpose of the Constitution and law."

Then came the Zia-Junejo era. The Eighth Amendment Bill was passed in 1985. The rules were not suspended. Debates continued for around six months before it was passed. The Ninth Amendment Bill (concerning Islamic injunctions) was introduced but never passed. The Tenth Amendment Bill, a bread-and-butter bill (amending Articles 54 and 61) was passed after due deliberation.

The Eleventh Amendment Bill (women's seats) was introduced in Benazir's first round and was not passed.

The Twelfth Amendment Bill (special courts) was introduced by Nawaz in his first round, the rules were suspended, it was rushed through with little discussion and passed.

The Thirteenth Amendment Bill was introduced into both the Assembly and the Senate on the same day, April 11, 1997, in Nawaz's second round. The rules of procedure were again suspended and it was passed that same day, without any discussion, without one member even rising to ask why the rules were suspended, or to suggest there be a discussion. Government and opposition unanimously approved its passage. Nor a dog barked. This is the famous amendment, doing away with the overused Article 58(2)(b), which was introduced and passed to save Nawaz from a repeat dismissal. It failed to save him.

On July 4, 1997 the Fourteenth Amendment Act came into force. This Amendment admittedly had the aim of putting an end to lucrative defections. But lotaism only existed because all our political parties were in the business of buying and selling bodies. However, that was not deemed to be sufficient. The prime minister had to be further empowered, and so he was. A member of a parliamentary party is deemed to have defected if he breaches any declared or undeclared party discipline, code of conduct or policies, or if he votes contrary to any direction issued by his parliamentary party, or if he abstains from voting on any Bill. The prosecutor, defence counsel, judge and jury who can decide a member's fate is the head of the party, whose decision is not justifiable in any court of law. The 14th Amendment rendered the herd of legislators voiceless and the bell-weathers all supreme.

The 15th Amendment Bill, concerning the "Supremacy of the Quran and Sunnah", was then drafted, introduced into and rushed through the National Assembly, and passed. It was to be rushed through the Senate, but for reasons of numbers in that House, Nawaz and his men stayed their hand. Had he not been dismissed in October, 1999, he would have had the needed majority in the Senate elections due in March, 2000 and the 15th Amendment would have been with us. However, Abbaji's dream to make his son Ameer-ul-Mumineen did not materialize. We were saved by the bell.

Now, we must wish good luck to Pervez Musharraf, and good luck to ourselves. He and we sorely need it.

(The Daily 'Dawn', 7 April 2002)

Appendix-IX

An article in the Daily 'Dawn' dated 11 April 2002 by Sajjad Ali Shah former Chief Justice of Pakistan and "A rejoinder to Sajjad Ali Shah" by Abdul Hafeez Pirzada former Law Minister, dated 14 April 2002, throw some light on a number of issues including the situation obtaining immediately prior to the deposing of Z.A. Bhutto.

Referendum: the legal aspect

The other day Mr. Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Senior advocate Supreme Court and a former federal law minister who can rightly claim to be the author of the 1973 Constitution, appeared on television defending a referendum by a military ruler of Pakistan.

He spoke about the Seventh amendment introduced in the Constitution in the shape of Article 96-A, which was gazetted on May 16, 1977. It provides for obtaining a vote of confidence from the people by the Prime Minister by a separate referendum commission. The Prime Minister would stay in power if he secured a majority of the total votes, otherwise, he would be deemed to have tendered his resignation.

Mr. Pirzada also stated that there were special circumstances as the Prime Minister lacked moral authority for the reason that the opposition had en bloc rejected the results of the elections of the National Assembly and did not attend its sessions. The PNA had also boycotted the provincial assemblies' elections. In fact, there was a dispute between the government of Mr. Z.A. Bhutto and the combined opposition, which had formed the Pakistan National Alliance alleging rigging in the elections, and in consequence, there was a serious law and order situation. But at the same time a dialogue also continued between the government and the opposition.

This reminded me of a very chequered phase of the history of Pakistan and brought back old memories, when democracy, which was functioning smoothly, received severe jolts caused by the political leaders. The 1973 Constitution was made and enacted after the separation of East Pakistan to save and unite the remainder Pakistan. Full credit should be given to the framers of the 1973 Constitution, which was made with the consensus of all political parties represented in the National Assembly settling the irritating issue of provincial autonomy and closing down the door on military intervention by inserting Article 6 in the Constitution.

I still remember a procession of the members of parliament taking draft Constitution of 1973 to the President for assent declaring in a loud voice for everybody to hear that hereafter there will be no martial law in the country. The Supreme Court decided in Asma Jilani's case that General Yahya Khan was a usurper and the abrogation of the Constitution cannot be justified on the basis of the doctrine of necessity. Article 6 of the Constitution provides that abrogation or subversion of the Constitution or any such attempt amounts to treason publishable with death.

Going back to the question of the referendum in the Seventh amendment to the Constitution, it is pertinent to note that Mr. Bhutto as Prime Minister, before the completion of his term of office, decided to hold fresh elections, as he was confident that he would win the elections hands-down. The opposition parties did not like his policies and decisions in spite of the fact that Mr. Bhutto as Prime Minister declared the Ahmadis as non-Muslim minority by making amendment in the Constitution, imposed prohibition on consumption of alcohol in public and declared Friday as weekly holiday instead of Sunday.

His negative points were that out of seven amendments made in the Constitution, the majority related to the curtailment of the powers of the judiciary. The members of the opposition felt that they were being victimized and were being prevented from getting justice in the Courts. All the opposition parties including religious parties got united and made an alliance to oppose Mr. Bhutto in the elections of 1977. Incidentally, Mr. Bhutto allowed the PNA to have one single election symbol of plough although the parties had different manifestoes and had nothing in common. This was done because Mr. Bhutto was optimistic about winning the elections.

Mr. Bhutto filed his nomination paper from Larkana. Maulana Jan Mohammad Abbasi of Jamaat-i-Islami also wanted to contest election against him and file his nomination paper. But he was not allowed to do so and was kidnapped and taken away to some place. As a result, he was physically prevented from filing the nomination paper. Mr. Bhutto was declared to have won the election unopposed. This act was severely criticized by political circles and the print media as not befitting to the prime minister who was a champion of democracy.

One view in a section of the PPP was that it was done without the knowledge of Mr. Bhutto. It was also being stated that if Maulana Jan Mohammad Abbasi was allowed to file his nomination paper and contest the election against the sitting prime minister, it would have enhanced the stature of Mr. Bhutto as a promoter and defender of democracy. Any way, the end-result was that the PPP captured 155 out of 200 seats in the National Assembly and won 19 seats unopposed including that of the prime minister.

The PNA rejected the results, alleged rigging and refused to participate in the elections of the provincial assemblies. In consequence there was a law and order situation. The authority of the government was challenged and Mr. Bhutto called upon the armed forces to act in aid of the civil power in Karachi, Lahore and Hyderabad as required under Article 245 of the Constitution.

In the meantime parleys started between the government and the PNA. The government delegation was led by Mr. A.H. Pirzada and the PNA delegation was headed by Prof Ghafoor Ahmed. There was confusion and lack of sense of security all around. Since the army was involved in aid of civil power, General Zia-ul-Haq

was also pressing hard for a peaceful solution of the impasse. Mr. Bhutto was also very eager to find a way out.

The PNA refused to recognize the government, which according to them was the outcome of rigged elections and insisted on fresh elections. Mr. Bhutto took the stand that he was an elected prime minister and would remain in power. But he offered that the dispute be resolved through a referendum and since there was no opposition, the seventh amendment was passed as Act No. 23/1977 providing that the dispute be referred to the people to answer the question whether they accepted Mr. Bhutto as prime minister and if the majority replied in 'yes' then he would continue, and if the majority did not respond positively, he would be deemed to have resigned and would step down.

The opposition did not participate in the passage of the Act and did not accept the proposal right from the beginning. So Article 96-A was inserted but was not acted upon and meanwhile parleys failed and General Zia-ul-Haq intervened and imposed martial law.

Now, it is crystal clear that the Seventh amendment was unnecessary and unilateral and was an offer to solve a particular problem. But it was not acceptable to the other side, which claimed that the whole exercise of election was a fraud and the government formed on such a premise was not legitimate. Hence the problem could be solved only when the results of the elections were set aside and new elections were held. Referendum under Article48(6) was already available in which the question of national importance could be asked from the people with answer 'yes' or 'no', then why the need was felt for a fresh referendum to be inserted as Article96-A.

The only reason, which is possible in favour of such an amendment, is that Mr. Bhutto thought that, he was rightfully elected prime minister but since the dispute was raised by the PNA that the elections were rigged, such disputes could be settled if people answered the question in a referendum and the majority favoured the continuation of the Prime Minister. It was directed that the referendum was to have been supervised by a Special Commission and its decision could not be challenged in any court or tribunal, making it absolutely final.

Article 96 is not part of the Constitution now and is repealed. Article 96 related to the vote of no confidence against the prime minister and that's why Mr. Bhutto agreed to insert Article 96-A for referendum as he thought that the dispute pertained to the confidence in the duly elected prime minister while the opposition maintained that the whole government was illegitimate as it was product of rigged elections.

I think Article 96-A (Seventh amendment), which even otherwise is repealed and is not part of the Constitution does not help the contention that General Pervez Musharraf wants to be president for five years if the people endorsed his reforms, when the Constitutional method of election of the president is available under Article

41 by the electoral college of Senate, National Assembly and provincial assemblies and elections are going to be held under the orders of the Supreme Court in October this year.

Election means that there should be a panel of several candidates, and electors should have a choice. This constitutional method must be accepted and not deviated on any pretext. Any deviation would amount to fraud not only with the people but also with the Constitution, which is to be interpreted for the benefit of the people and not an individual.

(The writer is a retired chief justice of Pakistan)

(The Daily 'Dawn', dated 11-04-2002)

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Appendix-X

A REJOINDER TO SAJJAD ALI SHAH

By Abdul Hafeez Pirzada

I have read with care the article by Mr. Sajjad Ali Shah, the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, in April 11 issue of *Dawn*. I and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah have interacted in many different capacities and in varied fields during the last five decades. In fact, I had the comfort of his association in the Ministry of Law during the painful and ominous days of 1977 preceding the imposition of martial law.

It is, therefore, somewhat surprising that the Chief Justice has missed the dominant thrust of my interview, which was aimed at the necessity and inevitability of safe and smooth transition from the present extra-constitutional legal order to the revival of the 1973 Constitution and consolidation of the institutions thereunder. My interview was given from a totally academic, constitutional, pragmatic and historic perspective, and I had candidly stated that according to his speech General Musharraf was seeking a democratic mandate from the people rather than a direct election. Therefore it was not appropriate to impute any political undertones to my views. We, lawyers and judges, often discuss and opine on many abstract constitutional theories and propositions.

Justice Sajjad Ali Shah is a witness to the political crisis of 1977, which had a debilitating effect on the democratic and constitutional order, resulting in military rule, which lasted a decade. In the struggle for the revival of the 1973 Constitution, many human lives were lost and hundreds of political activists publicly flogged in violation of human dignity. Thousands suffered jail and incarceration and some opted for exile.

The institutions were the worst sufferers, so much so, that when the Constitution was revived — albeit with amendments — the institutions could not produce and sustain stable and viable governments. Corruption, incompetence and nepotism became the order of the day, and five Assemblies and governments respectively, received a premature boot, between 1988 and 1999 and could not complete their normal tenure.

The lesson from history must be well learnt: no doubt the proposed referendum of 1977 proved abortive; but that was due entirely to the forces opposed to the Prime Minister.

In discussing the forthcoming referendum I had clearly pointed out the past and present constitutional provisions authorizing the holding of such referendums. The presence of such provisions in the Constitution is also candidly conceded by the Chief Justice.

Therefore, how can a thing be unconstitutional if it is expressly authorized by the Constitution?

Referendum is not a novel concept. It is a democratic process of obtaining the opinion and mandate of the people. Many written constitutions over the world have such provisions, which are pressed into service when the normal constitutional provisions do not offer a solution to a crisis or cannot break an impasse. General Charles De Gaulle, the great French President and statesman, resorted to this mechanism — albeit on the referendum recording a poll against him, he made a voluntary exit.

Today, General Pervez Musharraf rules by virtue of the legitimacy and validity accorded to his takeover of October 12, 1999, by the judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the case of Syed Zafar Ali Shah. The said judgment enjoins that General Musharraf will hold elections within a period of three years to bring the country back on the Constitutional and democratic rails. It is essential that the pursuit of this transition be effected as smoothly as possible. Any deadlock or disruption could, as in 1977, have extreme and grave consequences. Other points of fundamental importance which the Chief Justice has overlooked are that I categorically quoted from the speech of General Pervez Musharraf that "he was seeking a democratic mandate" from the people of Pakistan and referred to his reiteration that the 1973 Constitution must be saved as otherwise the country will never have a consensus constitutional document.

Lastly, I had pointed out that in the final analysis when the parliament and the provincial assemblies are restored, no matter what has occurred during the interregnum, whether extra-constitutional or supra-constitutional, whether adjudicatory, administrative or legislative, it will be the parliament which would finally grant immunity and provide indemnity, ratification, legitimacy and validation to all such actions, acts and deeds taken, done and performed during the interregnum from October 12, 1999, until the restoration of the sovereign power of the state in its constitutional and democratically elected parliament.

History records its verdicts in its own inimitable manner, overriding many a judgment, dicta, opinions and popular perceptions of the time. No doubt once again it is history, which will record the final verdict on this issue also. Can there be a more appropriate and poignant precedent than the case of the Chief Justice himself whose portrait today adorns the gallery of portraits of the former Chief Justices of Pakistan in the Supreme Court of Pakistan?

Before parting I must respectfully point out certain historical inaccuracies in Justice Sajjad Ali Shah's article. These are:

Firstly — The Chief Justice is in error when he avers that I appeared on the television "defending a referendum by a military ruler of Pakistan."

With respect, I stated the constitutional background and the present provisions therein, as a student of Constitution. This cannot be dubbed as supporting the political decision of General Musharraf to go to a referendum.

Secondly — The government team was led not by me, but by late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and chairman People's Party, of which I and Maulana Kausar Niazi were members. Similarly, the PNA team was led by late Maulana Mufti Mehmood, with Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and Professor Ghafoor Ahmed as its members.

Thirdly — The parleys started on June 3, 1977, whereas the Seventh amendment was passed on May 16, 1977. It was because the Opposition rejected the proposed referendum that Mr. Bhutto initiated the alternate process of a dialogue.

Fourthly — The "parleys" did not fail. On the contrary, on the morning of July 2, 1977, a complete written accord was reached, which was initialled by both Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and myself on behalf of the two parties.

No doubt it was the uncertainty, which emanated from the prolonged dialogue that encouraged the military commanders to effect a coup d'etat. It is equally clear that had the referendum not been aborted the clear verdict thereof, if answered in the affirmative, would have restored the moral authority of Mr. Bhutto's government and provided the much needed deterrent to any army intervention. On the other hand a negative vote would have precipitated the ouster of Mr. Bhutto. In either event, the Constitution and democracy would have prevailed.

I conclude by posing a question by way of a pure constitutional theory:

Can a military ruler, whose takeover and rule has been legitimized and validated by a judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, be denied the option of seeking a vote of confidence from the people through the process of referendum on any plane — constitutional, legal, political or moral?

(The Daily 'Dawn', 14 April 2002)

Appendix-XI

The matter of minority girls being kidnapped or abducted was mentioned during the Minorities conference in 1981. A recent report appeared in "The daily 'News' on 8 February 2003 as follows:

Kidnapping of Sikh Girl takes surprising turn

By Javed Aziz Khan

PESHAWAR: The kidnapping case of minor Sikh girl took a surprising turn when the Muslim community of remote Tirah Valley claimed the girl herself had come to adopt Islam as her new religion and she is in their custody with her own sweet well.

The story started on January 3, 2003 when Harvinder Koar, daughter of a local merchant Naam Singh, came to the house of a neighbour Nasir Khan and converted to Islam in the presence of a number of people. The Muslim community celebrated the decision with aerial firing and distributed sweets in the whole area.

Since then the girl is in custody of the family of Nasir Khan, as they fear if returned the parents would kill the girl. The situation has worsened as the Sikh community has warned to stage demonstrations if the girl was not returned to them. They have given a deadline of 48 hours to the local administration and made it clear that after deadline the administration would be responsible for any untoward incident.

The father of Harvinder Koar in his application to the federal and provincial governments has asked to take action against the accused for kidnapping his six-year old daughter. Naam Singh stated that Harvinder was kidnapped from outside her house where she was playing with other children.

It was learnt that the political administration has started investigation into the incident and is searching for the accused Nasir Khan.

On the other hand nephew of the accused Nasir Khan, Javed Khan Afridi disclosed to The News here that the girl is 12 years old and she has accepted Islam on January 3 by her own sweet-will. "She came to our elders and said that she wants to become a Muslim," Javed revealed. He explained that after her decision the people of the area assembled in a place and she was asked to recite Kalma tayyaba.

"No one forced her for this act but she converted to Islam as she was impressed by the Muslim community. Number of people from all over the valley were there and she adopted Islam in their presence," he added.

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Appendix-XII

THE GOOD AND GENTLE PAST

(Excerpt from the article written by Kamran Shafi)

Walking in E-7 the other day, I stumbled upon a gate plaque that brought memories of a long gone time flooding back. The small and quite unpretentious plaque announced "Chakma House" with a coat-of-arms, and the legend 'Chakma Raj' written upon it. Obviously the house of Raja Tridiv Roy, Chief of the Chakma tribe of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, former member of our National Assembly, minister for tourism in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's first government, and long-time Ambassador of Pakistan to Argentina. I could barely control my emotions when I recalled meeting the great man himself these many years ago; when I compared the courtesy with which that Prince received my friend (who was then the lowest form of life in the ministry), and I (a piddling Major in the army) with what one experiences now when meeting the *chhota logs* (small people) in government service.

It was in the year 1975 during a short posting to General Headquarters that I renewed my friendship with Saeed Anwar Khan, a childhood friend of my late brother Momin. At the time Saeed used to work for the PTDC as a Tourist Officer and had, in a fit of pique, resigned his job. He was a very young man then, and soon realized that he wanted his job back. He reapplied, and whilst the minister approved his reinstatement, the bureaucracy stone-walled (well, what did he expect?) and kept him hanging about, forcing him to work as a temp.

One day, fed up with this state of affairs, Saeed asked me what he should do. Why not call on the minister and bring this to his notice personally, I said. Saeed agreed, but only if I would accompany him as moral support! Well, I thought, what had I got myself in for? A lowly little chap like me, whom even a Deputy Commissioner, (Aminullah Chaudhry, the approver who helped send Nawaz Sharif into exile, indeed) could keep waiting in his *verandah* for hours on end was going to meet a full federal minister, eh? Cheeky, what, I said to myself.

The die having been cast so to say, I got the Raja's home telephone number from enquiries and with my heart in my mouth, dialled it — it was something like 5 PM on a winter's evening. Somebody with a highly cultured voice answered. "May I please speak to Raja Tridiv Roy," I stammered. "Speaking; what can I do for you," the voice answered. Great God Almighty, what was he doing answering the telephone himself? Didn't even give me a breather! I quickly collected my wits and said that Saeed and I, his friend, wanted to call on him. "I shall be going to Karachi tomorrow for a few days; can you come now," he said. Luckily we were at the Islamabad Club at the time, I don't remember why, were lucky to find a taxi, and drove to the Raja's official house on the Margalla Road in F-6.

We had the taxi wait outside, went in and rang the bell, and were admitted by a smartly turned out servant. An extremely well-dressed Raja Tridiv Roy, hand outstretched and with a friendly smile on his handsome face received us in the hall and took us into the drawing room. Tea and sandwiches followed soon after, and having made us at ease, he asked what he could do for us. Saeed and I quickly explained the matter. The Raja made a note and told Saeed he would hear from him within the week. We took our leave, were most courteously seen off at the door by himself, and our hearts full of gratitude, drove to 'Pindi to celebrate with friends at the then quite delightful Rawalpindi Club (about the rape of which another time). Sure enough, inside of the week, those same *Babus* who were giving poor Saeed the run around were looking for him all over Rawalpindi, appointment letter in hand!

So there you have it — the manners, the courtesy, the plain goodness of a highly born Raja, a Ruler in his own right, who at the time that I write about was not only a full federal minister, he was also Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's best buddy. And therefore a very powerful man indeed. Kindly compare his conduct with that of even very junior Sahibs that we all come across in daily life in the present Land of the Pure. By God, the arrogance we see every single day! Why, let alone a CSP/DMG officer, even a lowly Deputy Superintendent of Police wouldn't give you the time of day.

I do know that he was retired from the Foreign Service some years ago and wonder where Raja Sahib is now. I would be indebted if any reader would tell me, for I should like to thank him one more time.

(The writer is a retired army officer and a freelance columnist)

(The News International, Saturday, 22 March 2003)

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Appendix-XIII

MINORITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

By Raja Tridiv Roy

We often tend to forget that every member of a majority community is a minority in some context or when somewhere else. For a segment of any society anywhere, a majority status is only true when confined within a fixed boundary or compartment. Germans living outside Germany are a minority as are the Chinese outside China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau and Russians outside Russia, a Sunni Muslim in Iran or a Shia in Pakistan. Even inside Pakistan a Sunni of the Deobandi sect may find he is in the midst of a great number of Brelvis in a certain area or vice versa. It is axiomatic that in almost all countries of the world there are ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities. And in many, their cultural freedom and human rights need protection.

Some of the ancient empires built by the sword also perished by the sword. A Roman citizen in England and another in Italy took on different nationalities when the Roman Empire disintegrated. An Austrian and a Hungarian national became such only after the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Hapsburgs collapsed. Maria Theresa (1717-80) was the queen of Hungary and Bohemia and the Archduchess of Austria. She succeeded her father Charles VI as Empress of Germany in 1740. Her right to the throne was contested and caused the war of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). During her reign Frederick the Great attacked and defeated Austria in the Seven Years War (1756-63). Her daughter Marie Antoinette became the queen of Louis XVI of France and was guillotined on 16 October 1793. To try and decipher the nationality and citizenship of the mother and daughter would require quite a bit of working at the Jigsaw Puzzle. People in Alsace and Lorraine as well as Shleswig Holstein were alternately French and German as well as German and Danish nationals even in the 20th Century. The seat of the European parliament today, Strasbourg in Alsace, is back in France.

The process of historical change gave birth to the present day concept of political sovereignty in the nation state. In the last three hundred years due to centrifugal forces the political map of the world has changed a number of times. Nation states emerged as in the cases of the Central Asian nations on the demise of the Soviet Union, the resurrection of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, the separation of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Pakistan and to a small extent Indonesia (after the emergence of East Timor). On the other hand, sometimes states voluntarily decide to give up some of their sovereignty and state powers as in the case of countries that formed the European Union, by abolishing visas and the national currencies and adopting some common laws and shared responsibilities. So even if national boundaries exist they are being transcended by common consent in many fields. In this continuous process of political evolution, a majority can and does become a minority or the converse. The

Jews, almost a perpetual minority in known history, have now become a majority in the state of Israel. East and West Germany became one state and much of Europe is getting closer to forming one government, allowing centripetal forces full play. People thus keep groping in their eternal quest for the most viable forms of inter-relationship between man and man, between state and state and between citizen and state.

Minorities, religious and ethnic, almost everywhere feel discriminated against. Discrimination, whether actual and real or perceived, is a fact of life. In Canada, the US, Australia, and even in Japan and Brazil lately there have been instances of judicial and sometimes governmental actions in affording the minorities a measure of relief, like the creation of autonomous Nunavit. The Cree in Canada, the Inuit, earlier known to the west as Eskimos in Alaska (discovered by the Danish explorer Vitus Bering in 1741), the Amerindians and some of the Australian Aborigines are beneficiaries of these belated but welcome gestures. The modern day Americans too are increasingly aware of the ancestral wrongs done to the first peoples, to the African slaves, and to the Japanese Americans during World War II, and have consequently started a process antithetical to the previously racist and imperialistic attitude toward these unfortunate groups.

This salutary trend deserves emulation worldwide, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa, where subtle to the grossest discrimination exists. As far as Europe is concerned it is not that blatant today but is nevertheless on the increase against African and Asian ethnic groups. We would do well to keep in mind the massacre of Jews in Russia in 1905–6, of the Jews and Gypsies between 1939 and 1945 under the Nazis, and Stalin's "purges", wherein millions perished. Going further back, to the days of the Emperors Caligula (37- 41 A.D.) and his nephew Nero (54-68), it was the custom to throw Christians and slaves to hungry lions merely for sport. Apart from the saying current even today that Nero fiddled while Rome burned, while it may or may not be literally true it is nonetheless an indication of his attitude. Undeniable, moreover, is the fact that his mother was executed on the charge of plotting to dethrone him. Nero ignored her pleas of innocence and letters for reprieve. Yet it was through his mother's efforts that Nero had become heir to the throne. The Emperor Justinian brought about the cessation of persecution of the Christians and they were no longer lion-feed, and in 313 A.D. Christianity was accepted as a religion in the Roman Empire.

In 1189, King Richard the Lionheart was crowned in Westminster Cathedral. Shortly thereafter he joined Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and Philip Augustus of France in the "Holy War" against the Saracens in an effort to regain Jerusalem, which the Christians had conquered in the first crusade (1096-99). In the third crusade (1189-91) they captured Acre and set up a Latin Kingdom in the East. They fought against the gathering might of the Muslims led by one of the noblest of warriors, Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi, a Kurd, who often forgave and released his enemies after capturing them. It is ironical that today the Kurds are fighting against the soldiers of Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. The Ottoman Turks overran much of Christian Europe

in the 16th Century and twice knocked at the gates of Vienna. If Vienna had fallen, which it had almost done, the history of Europe and perhaps much of the world would have been vastly different today.

On 12 October 1492 Columbus landed in the Bahamas, then sailed on to Cuba and the island of Hispaniola that makes up today's Haiti and the Dominican Republic. However, until the arrival of the Pilgrim Fathers in the "Mayflower" in Jamestown, Maryland in 1605, the indigenous or native Americans, the Cherokees, the Iriquois, the Sioux and other Amerindians, continued to live their traditional lives in freedom, by and large unmolested by intruding foreign Palefaces, though the hostile but defensive "us" against "them" state of mind was there even then. But once the Anglo-Saxons arrived, they wanted to take over everything, including the land. They began massacring the natives and appropriating their lands, having developed the credo that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. The WASP, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, entity or group feeling developed later, despite large sections of Irish Catholics in New York and pockets in the eastern seaboard like the Kennedys of Boston, and in the southern counties portrayed by Margaret Mitchell's O'Haras at Tara in "Gone with the wind."

The Amerindians fought back with bows, arrows and tomahawks, in an effort to save their land, their culture and their honour. The Sioux fought a war and were finally defeated as late as in 1862, in Minnesota. The Europeans also introduced hitherto unknown diseases that decimated whole populations in North and South America. After numerous massacres, the Amerindians, or what was left of them, were corralled into "Reservations", in the United States. Frustration, humiliation and dishonour propelled the proud and upright son of the soil to a slothful existence, and to alcohol. The Amerindians therefore have had no cause to forget the genocide by the Anglo-Saxons in North America, by the *conquistadores* in Mexico, Central and South America, and also by some of the Argentine *caudillos*.

Human rights violations at the hands of despots or extremists in multifarious forms demonstrate how essentially inhuman human beings have often been when charged with power or with racial or religious fervour.

The Australian Prime Minister Howard had expressed regrets over the past policies of government that had caused so much suffering to the Aboriginal population. In July 2000, a "UN committee rebuked Australia," a Reuter report says, "for its treatment of Aborigines who make up about 2.3% of the 19 million population. It urged Australia to do more to make amends for a past government policy under which about 100,000 Aboriginal children were taken from their families, some forcibly, between 1910 and 1970, to raise them in a civilised environment. Official figures show that death rates among Aboriginals are higher in all age groups than for other Australians, with many of the deaths attributed to socio-economic disadvantage. Rates of suicide, crime, alcoholism, smoking and deaths in police custody are also significantly higher for Aborigines." A recent judicial denial of compensation to those who years ago as children had been forcibly taken from

their parents and raised by white foster-parents, was deeply disappointing. The Hon. John N. Button, former Member of the Australian Parliament, Leader of Government in Senate, and Industry Minister 1983-1993, in his foreword to *Patrol in dreamtime* by Colin Macleod, says, "Today there is an uneasy soul-searching debate about the issue of Aboriginal reconciliation. The High Court's Mabo decision of 1992 and the 1996 Wik decision have not in the short term made it any easier, but they have enhanced the probability of a just and more equitable solution."

The rights of the indigenous peoples have even stirred the judiciary in homogeneous Japan. The Time magazine, August 21-28, 2000, reports: "In a landmark 1998 ruling, a judge in Hokkaido recognized the Ainu as an indigenous people for the first time. While Tokyo has yet to follow suit, it no longer claims Japan has no racial minorities. Recognizing the Ainu as an indigenous people would raise land-rights issues the government would rather avoid. But after intense lobbying by Kayano and others, Tokyo officially accorded the Ainu minority status in a law passed in 1997." The Ainu number less than twenty thousand souls. In Brazil, too, the indigenous people are speaking up.

Sad as it is, today violence and discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities in the sub-continent have become endemic and are almost looked upon as natural phenomena. In Sri Lanka the ongoing negotiations between the Government and the Tamil Tigers, brought about through Norwegian mediation is a hopeful sign. In Bangladesh the conflict between the majority Bengalis and the ethnic minorities like the Chakmas and others collectively called the Jumma, and in India the insurgencies in the northeast have caused many deaths, not to speak of the terrible ongoing tragedy in Kashmir, and the horrors in Gujarat state.

In Pakistan, religious minorities often feel discriminated against, not as a consequence of State policy but for lack of political will to confront the extremist elements, which though a minority in themselves wield disproportionate power and authority on society at large. President Musharraf took some courageous measures to counter the onslaughts of the extremist elements, and now that we have an elected parliament and a civilian government under the large hearted Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, we can hope for the adoption of concrete measures. And the most urgent of these would be (a) the constitution of a Minorities Commission under the chairmanship of a sitting or retired Judge of the Supreme Court. The second most important measure would be the implementation of its recommendations and not its relegation to the dustbin as has been the case with so many important commission reports; (b) the Chairman of the commission should wield the power and authority of a Federal Ombudsman; (c) the induction of Ministers in the Federal Cabinet and Provincial Cabinets of Punjab and Sindh governments, if not in the other two as well.

In Europe there were the Inquisitions and religious wars, not to speak of the territorial wars. However, the blood and thunder, the cruelties and the hateful sprees of aggression have not been confined to the white races, nor to Europe and the Americas. In Asia and Africa history has recorded as many instances if not more of

murder, mayhem and massacre. In Latin America, Asia and Africa subtle to gross forms of discrimination and deadly antagonisms, like that between the Tutsis and the Hutus, are rampant. In Asia we can name conquerors even more bloodthirsty than the Europeans. Ghengis Khan the Mongol conqueror and the White Huns or Epthalites like Toramana and his son Mihiragula, are a few examples.

Leaving aside the rapacious conquests of the past as aberrations bred by ignorance, today in the new millennium too, apart from some sporadic forays into global poverty eradication, and anti-Aids campaigns, and fitful gestures at social justice here and there, the overall picture of the deprived and disinherited, particularly amongst the minorities all over the world, ranges from pitiable to horrendous. Today, apart from the vast disparities in wealth and privilege between the proverbial haves and have nots, and the grossest discrimination against women from bride burnings in supposed accidents while cooking in the kitchen, to honour killings, Karokari and Vana, there exists persecution at worst and irresponsibility at best, in the treatment of religious and ethnic minorities.

In Bhutan there is the problem of the ethnic Nepalis. In Nepal, the resurgent Maoists had started increasing their militancy, though now both sides are negotiating for a settlement. In northeast India the various ethnic hill-peoples are asking for more political autonomy and economic justice. In Burma, apart from the Karen and Shan aspirations there is the standoff between the democratic forces under Daw Suu Kyi and the military government. The Kashmir conflict rages on, occasionally threatening a full-fledged war between the nuclear states of India and Pakistan, whose armies are still facing each other with fingers on the trigger, though there have recently been a withdrawal of some of the Indian forces, and Pakistan's declaration of a similar response.

The long held dispute between Argentina and Chile on the Beagle channel was resolved by Papal arbitration, and the border dispute between Peru and Ecuador are close to a similar non-violent, negotiated settlement. Norwegian efforts have brought about a ceasefire and a probable settlement in Sri Lanka. In the same manner, that is through third party arbitration, mediation or facilitation for dialogue we can try to resolve other territorial disputes between States. Tripartite dialogue and negotiations on Kashmir in which the Kashmiris are included, would be a step forward.

In Bangladesh, there was a Peace Accord signed between the government and the Shanti Bahini in December 1997, as a result of which the Jumma, mainly Chakma freedom fighters, laid down their arms. Despite a lapse of five years in the troubled Chittagong Hill Tracts the promised Regional Council has been formed but has not started functioning. Many of the thousands of uprooted hillpeople have neither got back their lands nor proper compensation. The government sponsored and inducted settlers from the plains districts have not been rehabilitated outside the Tracts, despite the European Community's offer to finance the operation. Some of the promised amendments too have not been introduced in parliament. Documented

gross human rights violations have not been inquired into, or when inquiries were held the inquiry reports have not been published. Needless to say not a single person has been tried for human rights violations, including murder, nor any relief provided to the maimed or to the next of kin of the victims.

Apart from the injustices to the Jummas in the Hill Tracts, there is the festering case of the 'Biharis'. It appears that neither Bangladesh nor Pakistan, nor the international community, is sufficiently interested in rehabilitating these unfortunate people either in Bangladesh or Pakistan or in some other countries. As a consequence thousands live wretched lives in deplorable conditions in refugee camps in the Bangladesh capital, Dhaka. And this has been their fate since 1971.

In "Double standards on HR issues," Tommy Koh, the statesman of Singapore writes, "Because the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was formulated against the background of the unspeakable horrors that Europeans, especially Jews, suffered during the World War II, the driving inspiration behind it was to protect the individual against the state. In the past 50 years, the declaration has given birth to a large family of international human rights laws, institutions, procedures and norms. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the declaration, the Asia-Europe Foundation and the German weekly newspaper Dei Zeit recently co-organised a colloquium in Hamburg. It brought together 40 Asian and European statesmen, scholars and activists in the field of human rights."

It is not only obvious but urgent that minorities be protected. They need more than professions of good intentions by governments, particularly at international moots, where they are all professed champions of human rights and protectors of the minorities in their charge. Religious and ethnic minorities definitely and on a priority basis require the establishing of an independent, fully autonomous Anti-discrimination Authority under the auspices of the UN or as an organ of the UNHCR, under Mary Robinson or someone like her. The ADA must have adequate authority to monitor, inspect, and take punitive actions wherever discrimination or human rights violations occur. They should also have their subsidiary establishments wherever they consider necessary. The ADA should submit an annual report to the Secretary General who should present it to the General Assembly every September.

These measures are not going to eradicate discrimination or human rights violations immediately but they would help reduce them. The problem and the challenge lies in finding an acceptable balance, an equilibrium, between a state's right to disallow "interference" in its internal affairs on the one hand, and a minority community citizen's right to be protected against omissions and commissions by the state or its functionaries or groups of citizens.

In the 1960s, I had asked, on the floor of the East Pakistan Assembly, that on the lines of the French Droits Administration and the Scandinavian Ombudsman, the institution of Ombudsman should be introduced in Pakistan, initially at the provincial level. Considerably later, but nevertheless, we have Ombudsmen in Pakistan today.

To protect citizens' rights further this office should be strengthened and be made more accessible, even at the tehsil and union level.

To empower a supranational body, states will have to give up a small part of their jealously guarded "sovereignty", but nations everywhere have already made some concessions in this regard or else the United Nations and its various organs including the Hague Court for war crimes in Bosnia could not have been set up, nor the European Union, the European Parliament, the Euro etc., and of course the newly created International Criminal Court. The High Commissioner for Human Rights certainly needs greater empowerment and resources as Mary Robinson had pointed out so clearly and emphatically.

Can a modern day dictator perpetrate another holocaust within the state boundaries? If the scale of murder and mayhem is not widely publicized, can and do human rights violations take place in different and diverse parts of the "global village"? The answer is an unequivocal YES. We cannot allow the state or a given society to have absolute authority to ride roughshod over human rights and commit violations against its own citizens, be it through state machinery or groups or individuals. This then is the bottom line.

So then what are we waiting for? How many more of the interminable resolutions at national and international fora would we require before a potent, capable, internationally supported and universally recognized body is established and empowered to take punitive as well as preventive measures against infringements of Human Rights as defined in the Universal Declaration? Only then can we hope to minimize persecution and cruel and inhuman violations. Only then can we have a fair and humane interaction between the wielders of authority in a state and its minority citizens, and in some societies its women. Is that too much to expect in this new millennium? Or do we have to wait for the year 3000 to arrive?

(An article written in March 2003)

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Appendix -XIV

ARGENTINA'S CAUDILLO TEMPTATION

By Roberto Guareschi

"I've never known defeat; I've never lost an election." This is former Argentine president Carlos Menem's mantra as he tries to encourage wavering supporters to defy his adversaries. Menem is certainly right to make the claim- but only technically. This past month Menem suffered a sharp political blow when he won only 24.3 percent of the vote in the first round of Argentina's presidential election. His tally was mere 2.3 percent more votes than the total received by Nestor Kirchner, another Peronist candiate who faces Menem in a May 18 run-off election.

Although Menem and Kirchner ran neck and neck in the first round, this was not the case between Menem and all the other candiates. More than 70 percent of Argentine voters opted for someone else. But caudillos, Latin America's populist bosses such as Menem, do not willingly – or graciously – accept their falls from popular adoration.

Argentines like to consider themselves a species apart from others in Latin America, and for this they are little loved on the continent. But, in fact, their capacity to choose caudillos as leaders makes them true brothers of many of their Latin American compatriots, who have also failed to create solid democratic institutions.

But the system that Menem the caudillo built is fatally damaged. It collapsed last December 19, when President Fernando dela Rua could not revive the state he inherited from Menem. As a result, any semblance of a viable economy vanished and most Argentines descended into poverty.

Menem, of course, is no longer in power, but his legacy lives on in a myriad of ways: the country's 17 percent unemployment rate, extraordinarily low wages, inflation, political corruption, a weak judiciary, and a high crime rate. The Argentina that once had the highest social mobility in Latin America no longer exists.

Argentines have lost hope, and their institutions lack legitimacy. Menem's magic touch no longer exists. As the presidential run-off approaches, he appears increasingly angry, distracted, somewhat numb. Perhaps he senses that Argentines are simply tired of their attractive, yet unreliable, caudillo.

Kirchner, who is almost assured of victory, does not (as of yet) possess any of the attributes of a caudillo. While he has not captivated the masses he did capture the votes of an electorate that dreams of a government which can bring more jobs, assure better wages, and increase security against crime. If he can deliver, Argentines may be ready to bid farewell to the caudillo form of government that has dominated the country's history.

What are the tests ahead? Argentina's new leadership must renegotiate the country's international debts. More than that, we Argentines must being to pay off our creditors. Economic adjustments are needed to increase the fiscal surplus: tariffs on privatised public services must be raised and the wages of public employees must be frozen at current levels. At the same time, Argentines and their leaders need to consolidate the budding economy, deal with social inequality, and reconstiute the political system and the integrity of the judiciary.

Kirchner appears ready to take on such a monumental programme. During his university days in the 1970s, Kirchner's politics were shaped by the leftist militancy of Peronism. Both the passage of time and his political maturation in the province of Patagonia, where he is governor, converted him into a European-style Social Democrat. True, Kirchner entered the election campaign not so much to win as to prepare for the next presidential election; but, as Menem's opponents fell by the wayside, Kirchner captured the spotlight.

If, as it now appears, Kirchner defeats Menem, he will need the energy and imagination of a great statesman. From the moment of victory, he will have scant time to put together a programme with the political forces that can sustain him. He will also immediately have to convince a sceptical populace, already hurting, that more sacrifices are needed.

Should Kirchner fail to get results quickly, his government may not last beyond six months. If, on the other hand, he experiences a quick series of successes even small ones – he will help usher in a new, post – caudillo era.

There have been moments of crisis in Argentina during which great movements have arisen. At the turn of the 20th century, the Radical Party offered the middle class an electoral voice. In the middle of the 20th century, when Argentina was undergoing industrialisation, the Peronist Party functioned in much the same say for the working class.

These two historic moments were, however, dominated by two bosses: Hipolito Irigoyen and Juan Peron. Now the the Radical Party is agonising over its role and Peronism is divided into three factions, perhaps Argentines will be able to construct a political option that relies on real leaders, and relinquishes caudillos.

But if yesterday's election incites yet more political frustration, we Argentines will again likely make the mistake of looking for a caudillo who promises to answer all of our prayers. If that happens, democracy may finally lose its legitimacy in Argentina. Social protest movements may become violent. A new populist boss or strutting general will then likely find fertile terrain to sow yet another adventure with authoritarianism under the cover of "magical nationalism."

DT.PS.

(Daily 'Times' 19 May 2003)

Appendix -XV

GENERALS IN POLITICS

By Zafar Iqbal

(An article appeared in Daily 'Dawn')

There have been, till 1971, two distinct trends running through military takeovers. The first is the general attitude towards civilians. The other was how to cope with the Bengali majority. The Rawalpindi conspiracy fell in the first category, but it was a sort of preview of things to come. There is also a third element, which cannot be underestimated — that is the joy of exercising power. It's great fun to be No. 1.

One of the problems with the vision of Pakistan held by Chaudhry Rahmat Ali and Allama Iqbal was that they, more or less, automatically conceived of it in terms of the West and North where people were larger and of lighter hue. In actual fact, when Pakistan was formed, the majority of its people were short and dark and furthermore, lived in the East. The resolution of this conflict was played out in three acts.

Act I — Immediately after Jinnah passed away power went into the hands of Liquat Ali Khan. Although from East Punjab, he was fluent in the 'wrong' language and was not acceptable to Punjab. The central unstated issue was 'how to provide Punjab control over Pakistan.' After the failure or abandonment of the 'Rawalpindi conspiracy', the failure of the Khatm-i-Nabuwat movement in Lahore, engineered by the Chief Minister of Punjab, there was an impasse. This problem was finally resolved by Liaquat's physical removal from the scene.

Act II — Nazimuddin, a mild and gentlemanly individual, steps down from the high office of governor-general. In the cabinet there were differences of opinion over policy. The issue was the constant assertion by Bengal in the formulation of policy, which became a continuing source of friction.

Act III — I am not aware as to what exactly precipitated the crisis but one would guess that after consulting the Chief Justice of Pakistan, who, in all probability, believed in strong central control, exercised by people of greater ability who naturally came from Punjab, Ghulam Mohamed sacked the Prime Minister and dissolved the Constituent Assembly. This coup was carried out with the assistance of the army. The result was the famous Tamizuddin Khan case. The Sindh High Court decided against the Governor-General, but the Supreme Court upheld the Governor-General's action.

A new and rather more divided Constituent Assembly was elected by the provincial legislatures. This permitted the GG/President to play around with various permutations and combinations of its members. A successor Prime Minister, Mohamed Ali, from the Bengal town of Bogra was duly installed. To distinguish him from the clever (Chaudhry) Mohamed Ali, the people, more or less as a lark, added Bogra to his name. He remained Bogra to his dying day. He was more of a joke than a Prime Minister.

He was succeeded in fairly quick succession by Chaudhry Mohamed Ali (the clever), Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (the experienced), I.I. Chundrigar and Feroz Khan Noon as Prime Ministers. In one of these Cabinets, General Ayub was also appointed as Defence Minister. The army had officially surfaced. In the meantime, Ghulam Mohamed who was becoming increasingly senile and incoherent, had to be replaced. The mantle was arranged to fall on Iskander Mirza, the Secretary Ministry of Defence, who had already promoted himself to the rank of Major-General. As far as one can gather, he simply walked in one day with a group of people, bodily bundled Ghulam Mohamed out of the Governor-General's residence and announced himself as the incumbent in office and the occupant of the house. The new Constituent Assembly enabled this process to be accomplished fairly smoothly.

In the meantime, the politicians had been working on a constitution. By 1956, an agreed draft was produced based on the principle of parity of seats between East and West Pakistan. In preparation for this event, the provinces of the western wing of the country were superseded and combined under one unit with its capital at Lahore. The face of the government, namely the Governor-General, and now President, had been replaced by a man with the rank of Major-General. Pressure for elections began to mount once the constitution had been adopted. The ruse of changing Prime Ministers, one after another prolonged the period of waiting, but by 1958, the moment of truth had arrived. Punjab could not continue to rule without bringing in the army.

On October 7, having passed the usual number of adverse comments on politicians, the army formally took over and the country was placed under martial law. This was a combined military and bureaucratic coup.

One of the nicer peculiarities of Pakistani coups is that there is no immediate bloodshed. Ayub streamlined this particular coup by removing Iskander Mirza after three weeks and sending him into exile. There were no charges, no cases and no involvement of the courts — it was a neat surgical operation. There are rumours that they also took away his Swiss bank account. Iskander Mirza certainly did not live a life of luxury in exile.

Young army officers were let loose on civil society to "clean up the mess." Their major contribution appears to have been the arbitrary fixing of "fair prices" of various items. People rushed to buy things before they disappeared either through purchase or removal to safe places. Within a few months it was recognized that the

young officers were a bit of a nuisance and they were withdrawn from martial law duties. At the top, Martial Law Administrators remained. As a matter of fact, a senior civil servant was designated as Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator. In about a year's time, differences of opinion occurred and he was sent off as an Ambassador.

The two most important immediate acts of the new government were the shifting of the capital from Karachi to Islamabad and secondly, creating a precedent for cleaning up the Administration of the so-called corrupt and inefficient officers through an extra-judicial process called screening. In all, about a hundred or so people were affected. Ayub Khan ran his government mainly with civilians. There were two army officers who, however, played an important role; Lt. General K.M. Shaikh, and Brigadier F.R. Khan. Later Lt. Gen. Azam Khan was added to this list as Governor of East Pakistan.

Ayub Khan had the following objectives: (a) Economic development of the country. (b) Continued rule by him for an indefinite period. (c) A feeling that he was popular with the public. (d) To make Pakistan a modern progressive state.

The last three objectives were supposed to be organized by the Bureau of National Reconstruction and the Ministry of Information. When the BNR/Ministry lost its clout after the resignation of Brig. F.R. Khan, we had a fairly rapid turnover of secretaries. Ayub's major weakness was his aversion to reading anything critical of his government in the press. Stability at the top in the Ministry of Information only came with the appointment of Altaf Gauhar who, as a very competent civil servant, provided the necessary service. Nothing that would annoy the President and spoil his breakfast any longer appeared in the papers. As a matter of fact, this state of affairs continued for the next twenty-five years until a much less competent Secretary Information persuaded the interim government of 1988 to repeal the Press and Publications Ordinance.

A suitable administrative structure for progressing economic development was set up under the auspices of the Harvard Advisory Group for the flow of external resources which arrived both in the form of military equipment and support of the Pakistan economy largely provided by the US and the World Bank. Under US leadership, other developed countries also played a part. The Pakistan economy floated on a flood of dollars towards prosperity. Ayub Khan also had the advantage of having the best Finance Minister that Pakistan has so far had. Unfortunately, the 1965 war with India halted this process. No one has calculated its cost, but in economic terms, it was very high.

It weakened Ayub's hold on power and towards the end of 1968, Yahya Khan, then commander-in-Chief of the army, thought that it was his turn to enjoy ruling the country. Yahya Khan's martial law saw a further intrusion of the military into civilian affairs. Lt. Gen. Pirzada was the virtual Prime Minister. The heads of the other two services, Admiral Ahsan and Air Marshal Nur Khan divided the rest of the Ministries between them.

Thus East Pakistan ceased to be and in its place emerged a new nation, Bangladesh, after a great deal of violence, bloodshed, death and destruction. In 1757 Bengal-Bihar-Orissa lost its independence with the Battle of Plassey. In 1905 East Bengal achieved its separate status. In 1911 it lost it. In 1947 it again achieved a separate status. In 1971 it became a fully independent sovereign nation. Let us wish the people of Bangladesh health, happiness and prosperity, and the country honour and dignity in the community of nations.

.....

Henry Kissenger in his book "White House Years", says: "Pakistan was under a military dispensation led by General Yahya and his comrades in his command. The tensions on the border with India had started escalating since March. On March 31, the Indian Parliament passed unanimously a resolution supporting its government's moves. By May, the Indian government ordered its armed forces to prepare plans for a lightning attack to take over East Pakistan. But, the military high command advised the political leadership to delay the action till November in view of possible Chinese intervention, believing that winter in Himalayas would restrict any Chinese movement towards the subcontinent.

The International community was very much perturbed over the chances of a full-scale war in South Asia. In July, US President Nixon decided to send his National Security Advisor, Dr. Henry Kissenger, to both the countries to help ease the tension in the region. He went to Delhi first, where he observed a fighting mood. On his trip to Islamabad, when he tried to inform the ruling junta of the looming danger of Indian attack he was astonished to see the insensitivity of the Generals. (Yahya) was oblivious to his perils and unprepared to face realities. He and his colleagues did not believe that India might be planning war; if so, they were convinced that they would win. When I asked as tactfully as I could about the Indian advantage in numbers and equipment, Yahya and his colleagues answered with bravado about historic superiority of Muslim fighters.... There simply was no blinking the fact that Pakistan's military leaders were caught up in a process beyond their comprehension. (Page 861)."

The above appeared in Dawn on 16-06-2002 and ended with, "Is history repeating itself after 31 years?" Then appears the name of the writer of this letter: Muhammed Ali Shaikh, Karachi.

The first uniform'

THIS refers to Mr. Hafizur Rehman's column in your issue of May 21. I can only add from hisotry to whatever he has written about the first uniform.

Amir of Kalabagh said when Ayub had appointed Yahya as Army Chief that he had appointed a drunkard and a debauch and he would regret it. (Lt-Gen Jahan Dad Khan's Pakistan leadership crisis OUP 1999). Indeed the whole nation regretted that decision.

On sycophancy there are a couple of examples. One of Ayub's ministers told Lt-Gen Gul Hasan that the decision to devalue rupee had to be taken. Ayub closed his eyes, leaned back in his chair and after a minute or so came back from his reverie and said: " Rupee will not be devalued." Gul said that Ayub must have given it a good thought. The minister sauid: " No, the instructions came from above." (From Lt-Gen. Gul Hassan's memoires)

A politician from Sindh, Pir Ali Mohammed Rashidi, advised Ayub to become king. Ayub was serious enough to constitute a committee on the issue of which Z.A. Bhutto was a member. On Bhutto's dissenting note, Ayub wrote: "Behtar salah, but it was not a bad idea." (From Bhutto's If I am assassinated)

About Ayub's appearance and stature, I will quote Bhutto from his death cell (Col. Rafiuddin), saying that apart from his physical beauty, Ayub had a pigeon's heart and he panicked during the crises. Bhutto also said that the Pakistan army had produced only one general who was a fighter – Lt-Gen. Akhtar Hussain Malik.

Thank you Mr. Hafiz for taking us down the memory lane. May God give you strength to come out with more truths.

(Aslam Minhas – Karachi)

(The above letter appeared in Daily Dawn, May 25, 2003)

Rejoinder from Ali Yahya Khan

THIS refers to Mr. Aslam Minhas's letter entitled "The first unifrom" (May 25), with an excerpt from Lt-Gen. Jahandad's book, *Pakistan Leadership Crisis*, insinuating that the appointment of Yahya Khan as the C-in-C was considered by the Nawab of Kalabagh 'a regrettable decision'.

Let me put the record straight. I distinctly remember that Amir Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh called on my father and expressed his unreserved congratulations on his well-deserved appointment as C-in-C of the army. I would like to mention here that it is part of our poltical culture that all the good deeds of our leaders are completely thrown overboard and attention is only given to their private lives. This, in my opinion, should be enough to put at rest Gen. Jahandad's remarks in his book.

I may inform the readers here that Gen. Jahandad was a middle-level officer, probably a major at that time.

Ali Yahya Khan – Rawalpindi
(The above letter appeared in Daily Dawan, May 29, 2003)

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THE DEPARTED MELODY

The departed melody for me is a spiral of jasmines, gardenias and tuberoses. Its fragrance dances in the gentle breeze carrying its cargo of memories of loved ones and joyous moments. Yet as it vanishes its presence lingers on like a vivid dream on awaking.

RAJA TRIDIV ROY

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